

The Cultural Dimension of Army Transition

**A Monograph
by
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Abstract

THE CULTURAL DIMENSION OF ARMY TRANSITION by Major Angus Myles Arthur Tilney, British Army, 59 pages.

The British Army and its allies face fundamental change as the campaigns of the past decade draw down and they reconfigure for the complex and evolving threats of the future. As Western armies transition towards geostrategic uncertainty, they must become flexible and adaptable in order to confront the unexpected, and to avoid the perennial pitfall of training to fight the last war. This monograph explores the cultural dimension of army transition which will allow broad physical capabilities to be rapidly adapted to the specific contexts of future warfare. It does this by recognizing that culture is the mental programming that shapes an organization's behavior, and therefore defines the organization to a greater extent than its physical capabilities. As such, culture must be shaped to suit the strategic requirements of the organization. The monograph explores and applies this alternative conceptual approach to Army transition.

By applying the theoretical approach derived by the monograph, the research examines current British Army culture. It discovers that recent campaigns have improved the efficiency and professionalism of the British Army considerably, but have also nurtured mechanistic bureaucracy as a means of managing the considerable strains of overstretched campaigns. The resultant culture contradicts the central doctrinal ideas of Mission Command and the Manoeuvrist Approach, hence creating cultural tension between the values preached and the values practiced. Furthermore, the culture that has been forged by recent operations is unsuited to the future strategic requirements of the British Army.

The theoretical approach is further applied to derive changes that shape cultural values towards the flexible and adaptable requirements of the future. By empowering individual initiative and creativity to the lowest level, and by encouraging ad hoc networks within the formal hierarchy, the British Army can enable more fluid evolution. By broadening worldviews through training and education, the organization can adapt to the complex global environment in which it operates, while the continuous refinement of processes can streamline bureaucracy and encourage creativity. These initiatives shape the cultural dimension of the British Army towards future requirements, so as to complement physical capabilities and allow their flexible employment.

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1. Recognizing Culture in a Changing Army

Military culture may be the most important factor not only in military effectiveness, but also in the processes involved in military innovation, which is essential to preparing military organizations for the next war.

— Williamson Murray, 1999.

1.1. Army Transition

The past twenty years have seen profound changes in the British military. Various influences are attributable for these changes, the most notable being operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, the rise of information systems, and broader changes in geopolitics since the Cold War. As operations in Afghanistan draw towards a close, and with combat troops out of Iraq, the landscape is set for the next profound change in the Army. We are entering a period of transition. Army transition coincides with the “worst financial crisis since the Great Depression,” creating very real pressures on the way in which the British Army must develop.¹ Moreover, the face of threat has become blurred, and despite theories of hybrid warfare,² network centric warfare,³ and the “signposts to the future”⁴ offered by recent operations, the future remains murky and uncertain. In facing the problems of tomorrow, while burdened with the constraints of today, detailed introspection must ascertain what the British Army has become, and how it can address the uncertainties of a changing world.

The Army 2020 plan for transition details how the British Army will structurally reconfigure for the future.⁵ Based on the projected threats of the future, it configures capabilities that will meet these

¹Barack Obama, comment made during debate with Republican rival John McCain, “Obama: U.S. in worst crisis since Depression,” *Reuters*, 7 October 2008, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2008/10/08/usa-politics-debate-economy-idUSN0749084220081008> (accessed 6 April 2012).

²Frank G Hoffman, “Conflict in the 21st Century: The Rise of Hybrid Wars,” (Monograph, Pontomac Institute for Policy Studies, Arlington, Virginia, 2007).

³Arthur K. Cebrowski, *The Implementation of Network-Centric Warfare* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Defense, Office of Force Transformation, 2005).

⁴General Sir David Richards, “Twenty-first Century Armed Forces-Agile, Relevant, Useable” (Transcript from speech, *Chatham House*, 17 September 2009), http://www.chathamhouse.org.uk/files/14815_170909richards.pdf (accessed 20 March 2011).

⁵British Army, *Transforming The British Army, July 2012*, Information brochure (London, U.K.: Crown Copyright, 2012).

threats. But it will never be possible to specifically identify all future threats, or the character of future warfare that emerges from them. As such, capabilities must adapt to the context of the emerging threat if they are to be relevant. It is the ability to adapt and evolve to meet the nature of emerging threats that this research addresses. This monograph hypothesizes that the ability to rapidly evolve to meet future threats is a function of organizational culture. In exploring this hypothesis, it answers the research question, “What role does culture play in transitioning the British Army to a future force?”

Three inspirations drive the exploration of the cultural dimension of transition: history, resources, and the enemy. Firstly, historical evidence suggests that armies have rarely predicted the character of future conflict, instead being lured by the evidence of recent conflict, so that they invariably train to fight the last war. Secondly, resources will always constrain capabilities, and there will never be enough resources to address all eventualities. Thirdly, the enemy will always strike at the weakest point, so that the ability to evolve and adapt will be the measure of success. As a result, armies must be flexible and adaptable in culture, rather than simply broad in their capabilities and focused solely on perceived threats.

1.2. Strategic Direction

Determining the required capabilities of the British Army demands an understanding of future threats to national interests, and how Britain might interact with the global community in addressing these threats. Unfortunately, defining future threats is near impossible; it is the business of crystal ball gazing in an attempt to avoid the paradigm of training for the last war. This section identifies the institutionally accepted strategic threats facing the United Kingdom, and articulates the political direction that guides British Army transition. It highlights the similarities with the UK’s key coalition partner and leader, the United States, and therefore acknowledges the common challenge shared by both armies.

Dramatic changes in the British public sector are already underway. In January 2012 the Secretary of State for Defence highlighted the strategic challenge in the House of Commons: “History tells us that, without a strong economy and sound public finances, it is impossible to sustain in the long term the military capability required to project power and maintain Defence. The debt crisis is therefore a

strategic threat to the future security of our nation and to the security of the West.”⁶ While the Army is at a strategic crossroads in drawing towards closure in Afghanistan, the future Army must recognize that “capability and affordability must go hand in hand.”⁷ Central to transition therefore, is an understanding of what capabilities are demanded within these affordable constraints.

The Development Concepts and Doctrine Centre (DCDC), is a British Ministry of Defence think-tank that works closely with the Defence Academy. DCDC “produce concepts and doctrine - underpinned by thorough research and experimentation - to help inform decisions in Defence strategy, capability development and operations, and to provide the foundation for joint education, both now and into the future.”⁸ In its paper *Future Character of Conflict*, DCDC groups future threats into seven “threat drivers” as follows: UK Geo-strategic perspective; climate change; demography; globalization and its impact; energy resources; failed and failing states; ideology.⁹ The extrapolation and analysis of these threat drivers does not offer a clear vision of what form future conflict might adopt. A thesis written by the author discusses a most likely, and a most dangerous, character of future conflict.¹⁰ The most likely character of future conflict is expeditionary warfare that follows the convergent nature of hybrid warfare as suggested by theorist Frank G. Hoffman.¹¹ The most dangerous character of future warfare is major combat between states fighting over national interests that threaten their way of life. To confront these dramatically different types of conflict simultaneously demands training across the spectrum of conflict, a

⁶Rt Hon Philip Hammond MP, Secretary of State for Defence, Debate in the House of Commons, 26 January 2012, Parliamentary business, Commons Debates, 26 Jan 2012: Column 469, <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201212/cmhsnd/cm120126/debtext/120126-0002.htm#12012667001266> (accessed 6 April 2012).

⁷Major General JR Everard CBE, Assistant Chief of the General Staff, Letter to the Army Chain of Command, dated 31 January 2012.

⁸British Ministry of Defence, *Development Concepts and Doctrine Centre*, MOD website, <http://www.mod.uk/DefenceInternet/microsite/dcfc/> (accessed 13 Apr 2012).

⁹Development Concepts and Doctrine Centre, *Future Character of Conflict*, (London: Ministry of Defence, Strategic Trends Programme, 2010), 4.

¹⁰Angus M. A. Tilney, “Preparing the British Army for Future Warfare” (Thesis, U.S. Command and General Staff College, Leavenworth, Kansas, 2011).

¹¹Frank G Hoffman, “Conflict in the 21st Century: The Rise of Hybrid Wars” (Monograph, Potomac Institute for Policy Studies, Arlington, Virginia, 2007).

challenge that warrants the consideration of Frederick the Great's well known quote, "he who defends everything defends nothing."¹² But in the absence of an obvious enemy, policy makers are left stranded in an enduring paradox: the enemy, whoever he may be, will strike you where you are weakest, but if you defend everything, you defend nothing. As a strategic compromise, policy makers seek flexibility and adaptability in order to posture for the uncertain threats of the future.

Demanding a flexible and adaptable Army appears to be a non-committal vision for the future. In preparation for these changes, and as operations in Afghanistan draw towards closure, the British Army looks towards regaining the ability for contingency operations.¹³ It must be ready for the unexpected and be comfortable with risk.¹⁴ General Sir Peter Wall, British Chief of the General Staff, said in a speech "The demands being placed on the Army now go to the heart of our ability to be adaptable and flexible, to be more than the sum of our parts, to find alternative ways and means, and to deliver genuine ingenuity and initiative."¹⁵ This calls upon "An adaptable Army for multiple challenges from intervention through stabilisation, to capacity building and engagement with partners."¹⁶ Following an announcement in the House of Commons by the Secretary of State for Defence on 5 July 2012, future plans for the British Army of 2020 (A2020) are headlined by cuts.¹⁷ "Army 2020 will create a more flexible and agile Army. Unlike the past, it will be set on a firm foundation of men and material, well trained, well equipped and fully funded."¹⁸ Behind the scenes, plans for changes in organizational structure, resource management,

¹²Frederick the Great, *Brainy Quote*, <http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/f/frederick140989.html> (accessed 2 September 2012).

¹³Major General JR Everard CBE, Assistant Chief of the General Staff, Letter to the Army Chain of Command, dated 31 January 2012.

¹⁴Chief of Staff Land Forces, Op AGILITY Warning Order, 24 Feb 2012.

¹⁵General Sir Peter Wall KCB CBE ADC Gen, "Transforming the Army," speech at the International Institute for Strategic Studies, 31 Jan 2012.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷BBC, "Army to Lose 17 Units Amid Job Cuts" *BBC News*, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-18716101>, 5 July 2012 (accessed 2 September 2012).

¹⁸MOD Press, "093/2012 - Army 2020: Defining The Future Of The British Army," *Ministry of Defence*, 5 July 2012, <http://www.mod.uk/DefenceInternet/DefenceNews/PressCentre/PressReleases/0932012Army2020DefiningTheFutureOfTheBritishArmy.htm> (accessed 2 September 2012).

training, and doctrine strive to achieve this flexible adaptable Army.¹⁹ To the many cynics, the future Army must do as much, or even more, with less.

Operations in the decade since 9/11 have reconfirmed the significance of maintaining the ability to operate alongside the United States militarily. As the major global military power, and as a nation whose national interests have invariably aligned with those of the UK, it is in the UK's interest to maintain military coherence with the U.S. with a view to complementing U.S. military might. When considering the future strategic requirements of the British Army therefore, it seems prudent to maintain an eye on U.S. projections. In *The Joint Operating Environment* paper of 2010, The United States Joint Forces Command agree with many of DCDC's threat drivers. Demographics, globalization, climate change, and energy, appear in their trends influencing the world's security. Also listed in *The Joint Operating Environment* are food, water, pandemics, cyber, and space.²⁰ The *U.S. Army Posture Statement 2012* reflects many of the same themes found in current British Army dialogue: "An unpredictable and dynamic global security environment requires the Army, as a force in transition, to adjust and reduce its size while remaining flexible, capable and ready to meet the Nation's requirements."²¹ "The Army of 2020 must have a versatile mix of capabilities, formations and equipment that is lethal, agile, adaptable and responsive."²² It appears, therefore, that the British Army is in much the same situation as its far larger and more affluent partner; both armies are struggling with the nebulous concept of achieving flexibility and adaptability.

¹⁹The ARMY 2020 project defined the design of the future Army. A design team lead by Lieutenant General Nick Carter CBE DSO, conducted a study to inform the ARMY 2020 changes.

²⁰United States Joint Forces Command, *The Joint Operating Environment* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2010) 12.

²¹John M. McHugh, General Raymond T. Odierno, *2012 Army Posture* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2010) 10.

²²Ibid.

1.3. Understanding a Flexible, Adaptable Army

The first challenge is to understand what flexibility and adaptability mean to the British Army.

This understanding is rooted in a review of the Army's purpose: "Armed forces exist to represent the national interest in situations where nothing and no one else can."²³ "The raison d'être for armed forces is to fight."²⁴ So the Army's purpose is rooted in fighting for national interests, in situations whose politics, environment, or inherent risk makes it inaccessible to others. Moreover, if "war is an act of force to compel our enemy to do our will" then the Army's success is measured in direct relation to an opponent.²⁵ And so flexibility and adaptability should be measured in relation to the enemy, the environment, and the politically dictated task. These ideas will each be expanded for the purpose of clarity.

Achieving greater flexibility and adaptability in comparison to the enemy, to use Clausewitz's metaphor of wrestlers, allows one to set the other off-balance and hence defeat him. An enemy may be set off balance either by a concentrated blow of sufficient weight, or by a rapid or unexpected maneuver that trips him and causes him to topple. The Army 2020, therefore, must maintain the ability to both strike a concentrated blow and conduct a rapid and unexpected maneuver, using both physical and non-physical means. When related to capability, this explains the sound logic behind the decision to broaden capabilities by splitting the British Army into an armored Reaction Force, and an Adaptive Force consisting of various different formations.²⁶ When considering transition through the lens of culture, however, this implies a creative and adaptable organizational culture that enables the Army to evolve to conduct a broad range of operations against a number of prospective enemies.

²³Development Concepts and Doctrine Centre, Army Doctrine Publication *Operations* (London: British Ministry of Defence, 2010) 1-3.

²⁴Ibid, 1-4.

²⁵Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*. Translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976) 75

²⁶British Army, *Transforming The British Army, July 2012*, Information brochure (London, U.K.: Crown Copyright, 2012).

Achieving flexibility and adaptability in relation to the environment demands a breadth of knowledge and experience that enables operations in a plethora of environments. Different environments imply different physical environments, different cultural environments, and different threat environments. And so the British Army must develop the capabilities to project power globally, and the equipment to operate in varied physical environments. This varied capability is covered by the Army 2020 plans. But on top of this, in order to have the cultural flexibility to adapt to the specific context, it must develop broad conceptual understanding and experience to allow immersion in the complex environments in which it might operate.

Achieving flexibility and adaptability in relation to the political tasks conducted, demands a broad foundation of situational understanding, and the ability to conduct operations across the spectrum of conflict. Given that operations are conducted in support of national interests, the operational art of converting “strategic objectives into tactical activity and employment of forces” becomes central to this adaptability and flexibility. But different tasks will require different cultural attributes depending on the context. For example, if the British Army is to achieve more subtle strategic objectives through small scale operations such as capacity building, then political and cultural awareness will be important values to support.

And so a flexible and adaptable future force must be built upon the broad capabilities described by Army 2020, but enabled by an organizational culture that allows these capabilities to be applied to the broad contexts of a diverse world. This monograph expands upon the cultural dimension of transition, so as to complement the physical changes already in motion.

1.4. Methodology

Given the abstract nature of culture, the methodology used to approach this question has significant conceptual challenges. The analytical search for objectivity impedes research when addressing an abstract concept such as culture; separating the dependent variable of culture from its more palpable influences undermines academic credibility. Furthermore, culture is not quantifiable, and its change

cannot be measured. Instead, a methodology is required that recognizes culture's symbiotic relationship to its historical and material context, and that accepts commonly accepted cultural trends without producing quantifiable data. Following numerous methodological iterations, a design based approach uses systemic analysis to resolve these criteria.²⁷

Systems thinking reflects a departure from the common analytical approach adopted by Western thought since its roots in the ancient Greek philosophers, and in particular Aristotle. Systemic thinking is an approach gaining traction in the business world, and is described from its philosophical roots by Zvi Lanir and Gad Sneh in their *New Agenda of Praxis*.²⁸ In their paper, they describe the academic deterioration of classical reductionist approaches, and the subsequent need for a new approach to thought. This new approach discards the linear, mechanistic, analytical approach developed by scholars such as Galilei, Descartes and Newton, in favor of a holistic systemic approach that recognizes that the whole is not always equal to the sum of the parts. The new agenda recognizes practice as equal to theory, and embraces chaos theory, complexity theory and non-linear systemic thinking. This monograph applies this system based approach to understand the causal drivers of organizational culture and therefore to shape culture towards realizing more flexible and adaptable outputs.

This monograph is written in five chapters. Following this introductory chapter, Chapter 2 establishes a theoretical foundation and explores the relationship between culture and the more tangible elements of change. The research focuses on the level of culture described by Edgar Schein as cultural values; the ingrained heuristics and espoused beliefs that shape organizational behavior.²⁹ It subsequently develops a theoretical approach for applying the cultural dimension of transition. Chapter 3 applies this theoretical approach to the British Army, by using a systems based approach to holistically understand

²⁷ Army Design Methodology is the latest iteration of a concept introduced by the Israeli concept of Systemic Operational Design in 2005. Doctrinally, it describes a clear methodology laid out in U.S. Army Doctrinal Reference Publication 5-0, published in May 2012. Philosophically, it engages a systemic approach to understanding which brings life to the doctrinal methodology.

²⁸Zvi Lanir, Gad Sneh, *The New Agenda of Praxis* (Tel-Aviv, Israel: PRAXIS, 2000).

²⁹Edgar H. Schein, *Organizational Leadership and Culture*, Jossey Bass, 1992.

current organizational culture. This is done through historical reflection to identify events that have perpetuated contemporary culture. Chapter 4 uses established theory to propose tangible changes that would shape the cultural values of the British Army towards a more flexible and adaptable organizational culture. Chapter 5 presents the findings by proposing a vision of cultural change, before summarizing concepts of the cultural dimension in transition.

The focus on the British Army reflects the author's background; to fully comprehend a culture requires years of immersed understanding. The perspectives of the author are accentuated by two years of study with the U.S. Army, which have placed him within an unfamiliar environment from which to recognize and reflect upon British culture from an external perspective. But while accepting the British focus, the level of culture defined by Schein's cultural values bears similarities to other allied forces with whom the British Army have shared operational experiences over the past decade. These shared experiences have, to a large extent, homogenized many cultural characteristics amongst allied Western armies. Furthermore, according to the well-recognized "dimensions of national culture" studied by Geert Hofstede, Britain and the United States share very similar cultural values.³⁰ The shared military experiences of the current generation, the common threats of the future, and the cultural similarities recognized by Hofstede, mean that this monograph should generate particular resonance with the U.S. Army, as well as other Western allies.

³⁰Geert Hofstede and Gert Jan Hofstede, *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind* (New York, NY:McGraw-Hill, 2010).

2. Understanding Culture

This chapter derives a common understanding of culture in the context of this monograph. Three conceptual discussions draw from theory to build this common understanding. The first discusses what culture is, and of what it consists. The second discussion recognizes what factors influence culture and vice versa. The third discussion contextualizes culture by building a model of culture's role within British Army transition. This model forms the foundations for developing a conceptual approach to considering culture in developing a flexible and adaptable British Army of the future.

2.1. Defining Culture

The noun culture is potentially broad in its application, depending on the context, and indeed culture, in which it is considered. The Oxford English Dictionary offers four definitions for culture which refer to the arts, horticulture, biology, and most aptly group behavior: "the customs, ideas, and social behavior of a particular people or group."³¹ It is this group behavior, or *Software of the Mind*, to use the subtitle of Gert Hofstede's book, that is the topic of research.³²

Cultural characteristics have different layers, some of which are recognizable to the outsider, and others of which are not. Edgar Schein considers culture to consist of three levels: artifacts, values, and assumptions.³³ The artifacts are those elements of culture that lie on the surface; observable, recognizable things such as language, clothing, emotional displays, rituals and ceremonies, manners. Artifacts are easily recognized, and are interpreted according to one's own cultural context, but the reason for their existence lies deeper than can be observed. Values are the shared beliefs of a culture, or organization, which are built upon experience. Assumptions are those values that have been proven so many times that they are taken as fact. The influential Dutch researcher, Geert Hofstede, also recognizes culture in layers,

³¹Concise Oxford English Dictionary, edited by Catherine Soanes and Angus Stevenson, Eleventh edition (revised) (New York, N.Y.: Oxford University Press Inc., 2008).

³²Geert Hofstede and Gert Jan Hofstede, *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind*.

³³Edgar H. Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, 4th ed. (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2010).

explaining that the level of culture described by Schein as assumptions are established during the first ten to twelve years of a child's life.³⁴ Assumptions are therefore established before recruits join the Army.

For the purpose of this monograph, culture is considered to be the established norms that guide organizational behavior. This behavior is broad ranging, to include the way in which people interact, reverence to rank, prioritization, planning, and acceptance of risk. This culture has various levels, which for common understanding will use the terms defined by Schein; artifacts, values, and underlying assumptions. Of these levels of culture, values and artifacts are most relevant to this study. Underlying assumptions are generally too deep rooted to change, and as such are not addressed. Values are the target of change within this monograph, as they establish the less concrete level of culture that determines behavioral norms. Artifacts, while too superficial to affect behavior directly, have an indirect effect on cultural values. Artifacts therefore, being more tangible than the values themselves, become a means of influencing cultural values indirectly. This connection is central to generating a conceptual approach to cultural change; artifacts become the tangible levers of change when molding values towards a flexible and adaptable Army culture. Beyond the influences of artifacts themselves, it is necessary to explore the wider influences that shape British Army culture.

2.2. Influencing Culture

Cultural values and assumptions are learned predominantly through experience, be it genetic experience, group experience, or personal experience. Hofstede considers this experience to consist of three levels: we all inherit the universal aspects of human nature; groups learn the specific characteristics of their culture; and individuals both inherit and learn the specific traits of personality. Within the boundaries of human nature therefore, cultural values are nurtured, with individual traits adding personal diversity. But tracking the nurturing process of any one individual, or organization, reveals an infinite array of unique experiences.

³⁴Geert Hofstede and Gert Jan Hofstede, *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind*, 9.

Scholar and organization theorist Mary Jo Hatch compares the environment in which an organization exists to a set of nested Russian dolls, consisting of the general environment, the network, and the organization.³⁵ According to Hatch, the general environment imparts political, social, technological, economic, physical, legal, and cultural influences on the network and the organization. The network consists of the competitors, suppliers, customers, partners and wider stakeholders that operate in and around a business, and the interaction with this network influences the business.³⁶ Hatch expands this model to the international environment, where there is significant overlap in the general environments and networks of different organizations.³⁷

To contextualize these influences, British Army culture is shaped by the system surrounding it, from the global and national environments in which it operates, to the military network with which it interacts. Its cultural assumptions are built upon those of the nation, and underpin individual and organizational morality. As Hofstede explains, assumptions are formed at an early age, and are unlikely to change by the time an individual joins the Army. They lead us to distinguish between right and wrong, good and bad, acceptable and unacceptable. The cultural values of the British Army are those shared beliefs founded from experience. It is possible to change these values, but to do so is often a significant leadership challenge, which upsets the status quo. The cultural artifacts of the British Army are those noticeable things that a spectator might observe: uniforms, organizational structures, routines, training cycles, doctrine. The general environment, both global and national, influences the British Army's culture through its systemic interactions, such as politics and technology. The network with which the Army interacts consists of those stakeholders and competitors with whom interaction takes place: enemies, the defense industry, other armies, the media, key leaders, politicians. As a whole, British Army culture

³⁵Mary Jo Hatch, Anne L. Cunliffe, *Organization Theory* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2006), 65.

³⁶Ibid, 67.

³⁷Ibid, 73.

evolves within the complex system of its multifaceted environment. Figure 1 depicts a representation of this complex system.

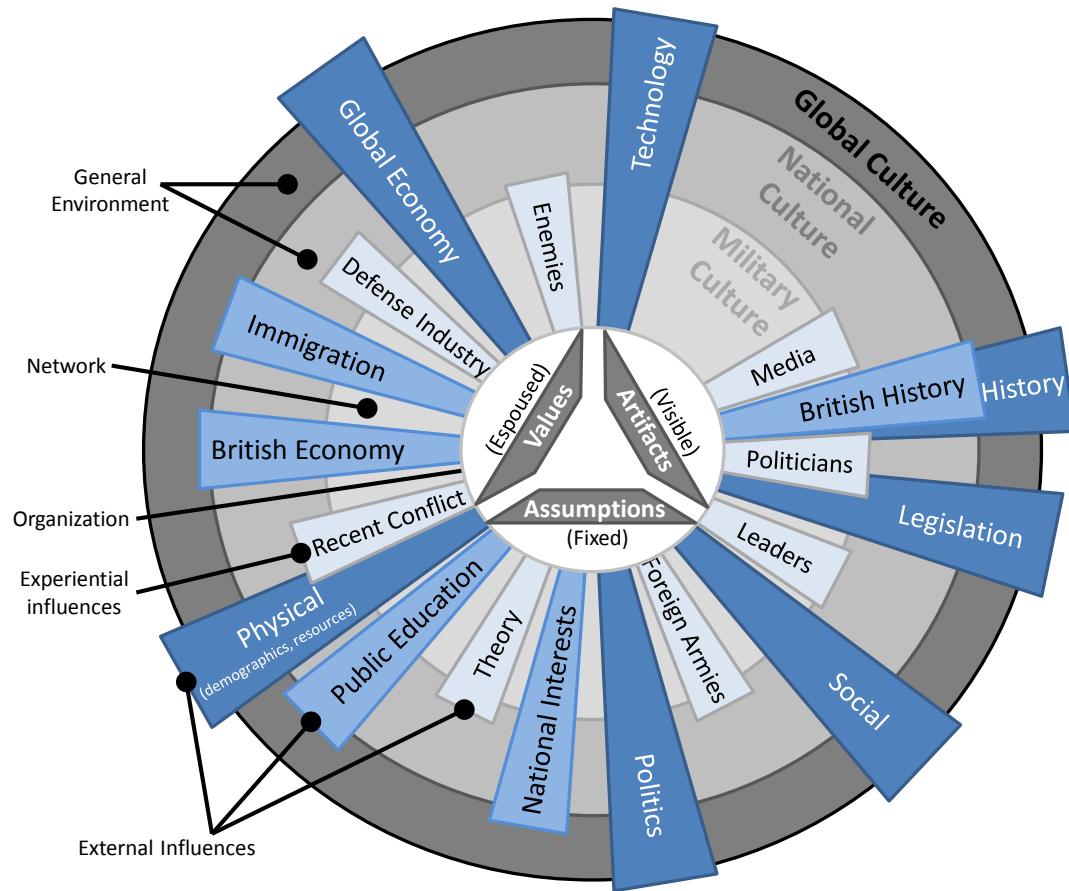


Figure 1: The Complex System Influencing British Army Culture.

Source: Created by Author.

In considering cultural influences, it becomes apparent that the source of influences might be either external or internal. British Army cultural values are externally influenced by the general environment in which the Army exists, as well as the network with which it interacts. They are also affected by the internal influences imparted by the Army upon itself. So influences stem from both external and internal sources.

To recognize the nature of these influences, some external and internal influences affect cultural values by imposing constraints, limitations, or opportunities, while others influence cultural values through experiences. These different natures of influence will be referred to as environmental and experiential influences respectively. Environmental influences, which might be imposed by an external force, such as government legislation or technological opportunities, or internally, such as planning processes, or Mission Command philosophy.³⁸ Experiential influences, which might again be externally or internally generated, offer a reference for how to respond to similar events in the future, and depending on the outcome of the original experience, we repeat, or do not repeat, the actions of that experience. In the military environment, these lessons are learned both individually and corporately. Repetition reinforces the lessons and builds them into cultural values. Table 1 summarizes this categorization of influences.

| Nature Source | External Influences: Generated by the general environment (national, global), or network. | Internal Influences: Generated by the British Army. |
|--|---|--|
| Environmental Influences: Imposed controls (constraints and limitations), or emergent opportunities. | Examples: national legislation, Geneva convention, technological advances. | Examples: Planning processes, organizational structure, rules and regulations, Mission Command philosophy, lessons learned process. |
| Experiential Influences: Influences arising from experiences, be it personal or observed. | Examples: WW2, Malaya, Northern Ireland, Falkland Islands, Bosnia, Iraq, Afghanistan, observed conflicts not directly involving the British Army. | Examples: Training exercises, adventurous training expeditions, pre-deployment training, career courses, annual reporting process, disciplinary system, mentoring. |

Table 1: Influences on Cultural Values.

Source: Created by Author.

³⁸The British Army philosophy of Mission Command advocates decentralized decision making as a way of encouraging initiative down to the lowest level.

2.3. The Role of Culture in Transition

Having established a theoretical understanding of culture and its influences, it is now necessary to explore the role that culture has to play in shaping a flexible and adaptable British Army of the future. In order to understand how culture might be used in transitioning for the future, its role in relation to other aspects of change must be firmly established. Recent papers discussing army change recognize the importance of culture. The British Chief of the General Staff, General Sir Peter Wall, said that we must “scrutinize closely how we run the Army in most respects and adjust our culture accordingly.”³⁹ Major General Cullen, in his warning order for future change writes “cultural change is key; we must re-learn contingency; bergans packed and ready for the unexpected, and comfortable with risk.”⁴⁰ References to culture highlight the implicit understanding of its importance, but it remains a peripheral topic of discussion behind tangible, and ultimately cost saving changes.

In July 2012 the broad structure of Army 2020 was announced. The announcement described restructured brigades with specific capabilities, geared towards the projected demands of the future.⁴¹ To support the capabilities defined by Army 2020, this monograph proposes a complementary approach that targets the cultural dimension to add flexibility and adaptability to physical capabilities. The means to affect this cultural change are the cultural artifacts that can be tangibly adjusted: organizational structure, training and education, doctrine, resources, and processes. It is accepted that changes must be nested within the structures of Army 2020. In this way the cultural strategy uses cultural artifacts to shape the cultural values demanded by a flexible and adaptable army. The result is an army with broad physical capabilities, and the cultural flexibility to adapt them to the complex world in which it operates.

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰Major General David Cullen, Chief of Staff Land Forces, Op AGILITY Warning Order, 24 Feb 2012.

⁴¹Lt Gen Nick Carter, who headed the study into Army 2020, described his logic in an interview at the Center for Strategic & International Studies on 28 September 2012. <http://csis.org/event/british-army-2020-ground-forces-and-future-national-security> (accessed 2 October 2012).

In order to embed this cultural strategy within the wider context of transition, Figure 2 places cultural values at the center of the organization, and cultural artifacts around them. It recognizes the wider environment in which the Army must compete, and depicts that the evolution of the British Army must be a continuous and iterative cycle conducted relative to its environment. It reflects the cycle of continuous change described by theorist John Boyd's OODA loop, rather than a series of incremental lunges catalyzed by failures.⁴²

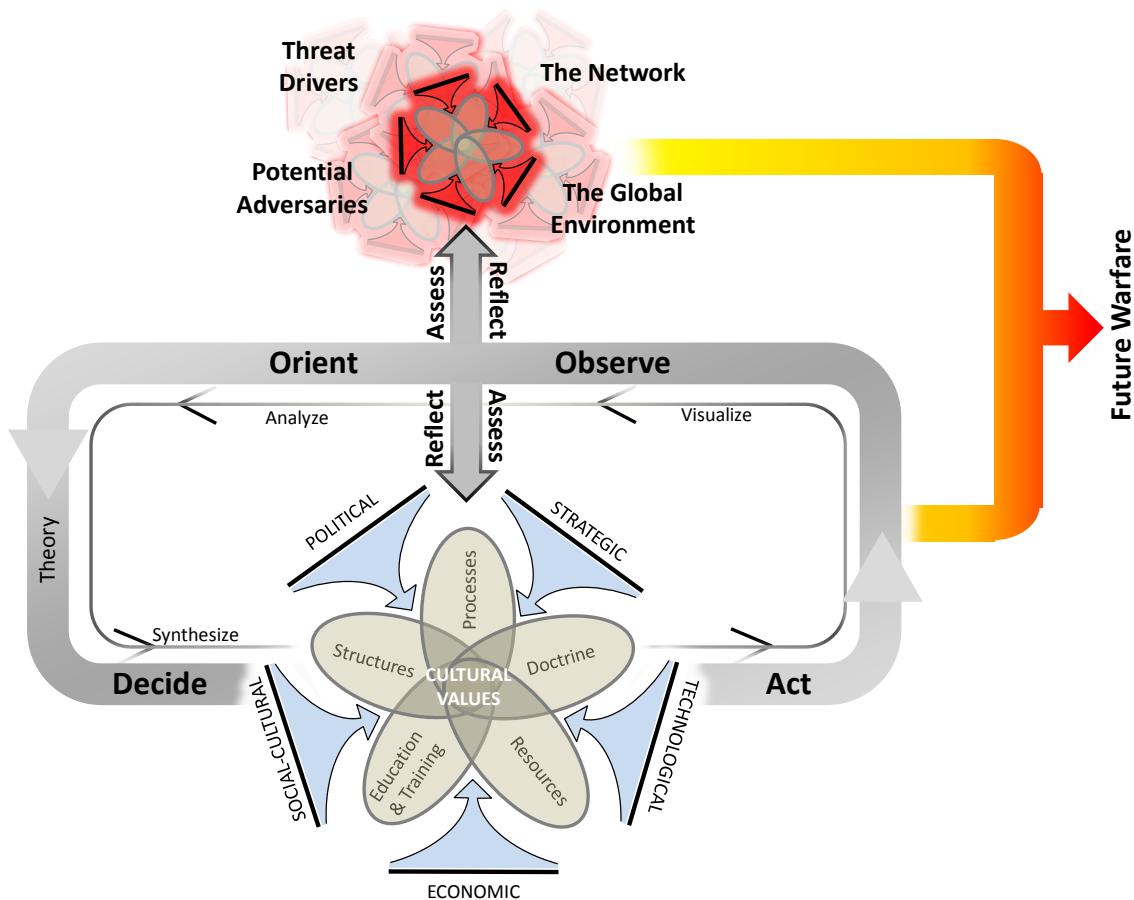


Figure 2: The Cycle of Army Evolution.

Source: Created by Author. Incorporating elements of Boyd's OODA Loop.

⁴²The Orient, Observe, Decide, Act (OODA) loop is a model of iterative evolution as defined by John Boyd. Referenced from Frans P. B. Osinga, *Science, Strategy and War: The Strategic Theory of John Boyd* (London: Routledge, 2006).

By placing cultural values at the heart of this evolution, they shape the way in which the Army evolves physically. The model recognizes the critical subordination to policy, as stressed by Clausewitz, but also the uncertainty of future warfare which may appear when least expected.⁴³ The central implication is that changes to the tangible elements of the Army, as declared by Army 2020, must be tailored to consider the associated impact on cultural values, so as not to adversely affect the nature of the organization.

2.4. Summary of Theory

Flexibility and adaptability are cultural values; part of the software of our minds that encourage us to be inquisitive, creative, open minded, willing to experiment, and accepting of calculated risk. Cultural values are shaped by the wider environment in which the organization exists, but can also be shaped from within by considering how tangible changes to cultural artifacts influence them. In transitioning to a future force, the broad capabilities defined by Army 2020 must be implemented in such a way that they shape the cultural values desired by a flexible and adaptable force. In this way, physical capabilities can adapt to the complex environments in which they must operate, and against the dynamic enemies that they confront, in order to achieve the diverse strategic goals they aim to achieve.

⁴³Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*. Translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976) 80.

3. Understanding Today's Culture

This chapter investigates the current cultural values of the British Army through a discussion of the influences that have shaped them. In order to build a layered understanding of the influences, it begins with the external influences, before addressing the internal influences. The chapter summarizes by recognizing the cultural values that have emerged and describing an image of the resulting system.

3.1. External Influences on Cultural Values

External influences are those emanating from outside the British Army, be it from the general environment in which it exists, or the network with which it interacts. They are both environmental and experiential. This section recognizes the key external influences that have shaped the British Army since the end of the Cold War.

3.1.1. External Environmental Influences

External environmental influences have emanated from the general environment in which the British Army exists. These external influences have shaped the cultural values of the Army, and rightly so; an organization that is not nested within the wider cultural environment would lead to a divergent Army that moves away from the people it serves and recruits from, creating an imbalance in Clausewitz's paradoxical trinity. The British Army might be considered an open system therefore, one in which it interacts and evolves with its wider cultural environment.

The primary global influences that characterize the period from 1989 to 2012 are the emerging dominance of a single global superpower, the rise of globalization, and more recently the War on Terror. Many theories try to explain changes in geopolitics, but in short, global security influences have become complex and ill defined.⁴⁴ From an Army perspective, global influences have created an era of strategic

⁴⁴With the end of the Cold War emerged a new age of global security which philosopher of science Thomas Kuhn might recognize as a paradigm shift in global security; a complete rebuilding of geostrategic interaction. Political scientist Samuel Huntington defines this new paradigm in "The Clash of Civilizations," a clash in which religious and cultural ideals collide uncompromisingly. Realists see a newly emerging balance of power, and liberals

uncertainty. Without having a defined enemy to confront, uncertainty blurs future configurations. The swelling prevalence of international terrorism, and the resultant counterinsurgency warfare, has provided a temporary focus for military outputs, but as the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan draw down, the military lacks a vision of the future. Where the British Army used to train for conventional conflict with the Soviets, Hybrid Warfare has provided a new focal point for conceptual preparation, in the hope that its breadth provides the framework for a more flexible and adaptable mindset.⁴⁵ The cultural values that have developed are those of being comfortable with uncertainty, respectful of the resolve of competing ideologies and mindful of the power of communications technology.

While global influences and culture have evolved, British culture has responded in its own ways. Increased immigration has accentuated the concept of the nation and the state being far from coterminous, with societies within Britain often having far different cultural values than those traditionally associated with the British nation-state. As summarized by Professors Frank Bechhofer and David McCrone, therefore, the political entity of the state contains various nations in coexistence.⁴⁶ The political entity, the national entities, and even the smaller societal entities each impart cultural influences on the British Army. The national and societal entities exert strong cultural influences on the British Army, more easily recognizable at the macro level in the English, Welsh, Scottish and Northern Irish nations that constitute the British Army. But there are also many other societies that contribute personnel, the Fijians and Caribbeans being notable among commonwealth numbers. Beyond this, the regional influences within the British Army are notable, as well as the smaller societal influences that all contribute to the melting

see the institutionalized global network enhanced by the effects of globalization. International security strategist Thomas Barnett posits a new security paradigm based upon engagement with the globalized world, in which “disconnectedness defines danger.” Thomas Friedman’s model shows power diverging from the more traditional state centric power base to super empowered individuals and organizations facilitated by globalization.

⁴⁵Frank G Hoffman, “Conflict in the 21st Century: The Rise of Hybrid Wars” (Monograph, Potomac Institute for Policy Studies, Arlington, Virginia, 2007).

⁴⁶Frank Bechhofer, David McCrone, *National Identity, Nationalism and Constitutional Change* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009) 5.

pot. But while the national and societal influences are largely self-evident, the political influence is less intuitive within a cultural discussion.

The political entity of the British State imparts cultural influences on its subjects through legislation and policy. The legislative influence on cultural values has been significant in the past twenty years. Of daily importance to the British Army are changes through the Human Rights Act 1998, Equality Act 2010, and Health and Safety legislation.⁴⁷ “The Human Rights Act 1998 gives further legal effect in the UK to the fundamental rights and freedoms contained in the European Convention on Human Rights. These rights not only impact matters of life and death, they also affect the rights of peoples’ everyday life: what they can say and do, their beliefs, their right to a fair trial and other similar basic entitlements.”⁴⁸ The Human Rights Act has seen many decisions in the UK courts in which public authorities have breached a person’s rights.⁴⁹ Although civil rights in the UK date back to the Magna Carta in 1215, there has been an upsurge in civil rights legislation since the Human Rights Act came into effect. The Equality Act 2010, is “the law which bans unfair treatment and helps achieve equal opportunities in the workplace and in wider society,”⁵⁰ while the Health and Safety executive provides further legislation covering more than seventy topics of relevance to most British Army units.⁵¹ The impact of this legislation should be beneficial to an Army seeking flexibility and adaptability; it broadens the cultural resources within the organization, while protecting the workforce. But while legislation seeks to empower and protect, it often has adverse effects on cultural values of flexibility and adaptability by enforcing bureaucratic and risk averse tendencies.

⁴⁷UK Legislation, <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/> (accessed 1 May 2012).

⁴⁸Directgov, Human Rights Act, http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/governmentcitizensandrights/yourrightsandresponsibilities/dg_4002951 (accessed 1 May 2012).

⁴⁹FindLaw UK, “Civil Rights and Liberties,” http://findlaw.co.uk/law/government/constitutional_law/fundamental_rights/500149.html (accessed 1 May 2012).

⁵⁰Home Office, “Equality Act 2010,” <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/equalities/equality-act/> (accessed 1 May 2012).

⁵¹Health and Safety Executive, <http://www.hse.gov.uk/index.htm> (accessed 7 May 2012).

Another change that has expanded with legislation in the past two decades has been increased accountability. Modern democracies rule in the public interest, or in response to the public will, and as such are accountable to those that they rule.⁵² But accountability is seen in two different contexts; either as bureaucratic control or transparency.⁵³ Achieving transparency without the bureaucracy that hinders flexibility and adaptability of process is a battle that popular dialogue suggests the Army is losing.⁵⁴ The climate of financial hardship further antagonizes the situation, placing additional demands on financial accountability and scrutiny. Accountability, often manifested in the “umbrella culture” of self-preservation, has consequently developed as a ubiquitous cultural value within the British Army.⁵⁵

3.1.2. External Experiential Influences

The Cold War offered a degree of certainty for the British Army; a known enemy, with known equipment and doctrine, offered a period of military focus and consistency. Since 1989, however, military operations have varied dramatically, and the British Army has deployed combat troops globally in many different roles. The most influential operations that have shaped the cultural values of today’s Army are those that have involved the most people, over the longest period; Northern Ireland, the Balkans, Afghanistan, and Iraq. Although many serving members of the British Army experienced Northern Ireland and the Balkans, Iraq and Afghanistan have been the dominant influence for the current generation. As such, the discussion will focus on the dominant influences of Iraq and Afghanistan.

Despite being very different theatres of war, experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan have enforced many of the same lessons, and consequently shaped many of the same cultural values. Intelligence driven

⁵²Karen Johnston Miller, Duncan McTavish, Robert Pyper, “Changing Modes of Official Accountability in the UK,” *The Future of Governance* (Newark, N.J: National Center for Public Performance on behalf of the European Group for Public Administration, 2010), 188.

⁵³Ibid, 175.

⁵⁴The ARmy Rumour SErvice (ARRSE) website reveals countless blogs referring to the frustrations of bureaucracy. <http://www.arrse.co.uk/> (Accessed 1 September 2012).

⁵⁵The expression “umbrella culture” is widely used in the British Army to refer to the cultural tendency to cover yourself from reprimand, often through the saving of e-mail traffic or similar evidence of correct procedure.

counterinsurgency operations have built a pronounced focus on cultural awareness and the fight for information. Action without sufficient intelligence equates to risk, whose consequences might see increased casualties, a loss of consent, or threaten operational goals. Counterinsurgency operations demand careful planning to consider the context in which operations occur, including languages, customs, and networks. This planning takes time and preparation, but the majority of operations are not time sensitive. In cases of time sensitive targets, well-rehearsed and practiced targeting options demand only minor tweaks before their rapid execution. Well-established bases form the nodes from which activity occurs. Once back inside established bases, combatants can relax in relative security, and enjoy the benefits of logistic surplus, and western comforts. Modern communications leave little respite from the appetite of operational accountability, however, and the demands of reporting maintain an all-informed awareness of every aspect of operations. The belief in the all informed network, as championed by Vice Admiral Cebrowski, Director of the Office of Force Transformation, shifts the balance between time spent planning and executing operations, and time spent reporting on them.⁵⁶ These influences have encouraged routine, deliberate operations, where the low tempo of operations allows the mitigation of risk through intelligence and detailed planning. Maintaining the initiative in this low tempo environment requires a different culture than maintaining the initiative in a higher tempo, less well established conflict.

The relatively low intensity of recent operations has had a major influence on cultural values. Due to the relatively low number of incidents, combined with the relatively high availability of fire support, troops in contact are able to rely on overwhelming fire support at short notice. Rather than respond to enemy contact through tactical level fire and maneuver therefore, the first option is to call for close air support or indirect fire, which can significantly reduce the risk to endangered troops. As Colonel Rupert Jones observes, “We have become seduced by the easy availability of air and artillery support. Commanders are giving up maneuver in favor of fire support. . . . We need to break our dependence on

⁵⁶Cebrowski, Arthur. K. *The Implementation of Network-Centric Warfare* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Defense, Office of Force Transformation, 2005).

fires.”⁵⁷ Similarly, the omnipresence of helicopter lift for casualty extraction has made it an expectation; only in exceptional circumstances is ground evacuation used. The resulting values that have become ingrained are the importance of all arms integration, and the expected surplus of resources when under duress. While all arms integration is a positive cultural value for future flexibility, the tactical reliance on supporting assets sets a dangerous precedent; historical evidence suggests that those assets are rarely available, especially for shrinking armies.⁵⁸ The reliance on fire support also detracts from the Manoeuvrist Approach central to British Army doctrine.⁵⁹

Beyond the influences of an established theater of operations, overwhelming technological superiority, and the effects of intelligence driven operations, the tactical and operational effects sought in Iraq and Afghanistan are very different from those of conventional warfare. Rather than seeking the Clausewitzian style destruction of an enemy through a violent struggle, “Gaining and maintaining [the support of the population] must be our overriding operational imperative.”⁶⁰ As such, operations have focused upon coercing and persuading the population to adopt a given model of governance and social ideology, thus deposing, or identifying, those elements that threaten Western security. This type of warfare demands very different qualities from its executors; social and cultural awareness, empathy, moral as well as tactical courage, patience, humility, and humanity. International security strategist Thomas Barnett suggests that the bifurcation of threats demands two separate forces: one to fight high

⁵⁷Lt Col Rupert Jones, “COIN in Afghanistan: The Tyranny of Fires,” *Defense Tech*, 26 May 2010, <http://defensetech.org/2010/05/26/coin-in-afghanistan-and-the-tyranny-of-fires/> (accessed 10 May 2012).

⁵⁸Very few historical examples show the capacity, or the ability, to flood resources to the scene of a crisis. More often than not troops have been forced to display innovation and courage to overcome resource shortfalls. Consider General Slim’s account of the war in Burma as just one example in which a constant paucity of resources placed troops at constant risk. In Burma, Slim’s Army was the third priority behind European and African campaigns, and as such a poor relative. Viscount William Slim, *Defeat into Victory* (New York, N.Y.: Cooper Square Press, 2000.)

⁵⁹The centrality of manoeuvre to British Army doctrine is discussed in section 3.2.1. Doctrine.

⁶⁰COMISAF Tactical Directive, quoted by Professor Theo Farrell, “Appraising Moshtarak: The Campaign in Nad-e-Ali District, Helmand,” RUSI, Jun 2010, http://www.rusi.org/downloads/assets/Appraising_Moshtarak.pdf (accessed 10 May 2012) 4.

intensity conflict; the other to build networks and security.⁶¹ Iraq and Afghanistan have demonstrated the second of these threats, a threat which Barnett suggests requires older, more worldly, emotionally astute forces. Interagency, as well as international and joint operations are the norm. Moreover, counterinsurgency requires people who can subordinate their own success to the success of those they support, to follow the often lethargic timeframe of those they partner with, and to execute the seemingly inferior plan of those they mentor over their own well educated solution. These are not the qualities traditionally promoted by the Army. The Royal Military Academy of Sandhurst aims “to develop commanders of courage and willpower, with the temperament for decisive action in difficult and dangerous circumstances.”⁶² This highlights how recent operations have shaped cultural values that are very different from those demanded of high intensity conflict.

Today’s Army relies on intelligence and superior resources, is culturally astute, and is used to working with people from very different backgrounds. It displays the endurance learned from a decade of campaigning, but conducts operations within established bases of operation. Deliberate, calculated operations are the norm, and detailed reporting is a major part of routine. Risk can be offset by intelligence and resources, and it is often better to circumvent risk to sustain consent for the campaign. The British Army has become more professional, resilient, experienced, and is tailored for counter-insurgency. According to Antulio J. Echevarria II, war has two separate grammars; the British Army has switched its culture from the grammar of conventional warfare to the grammar of counterinsurgency.⁶³

⁶¹Thomas Barnett, “Rethinking America’s Military Strategy,” *TED: Ideas Worth Spreading*, February 2005, http://www.ted.com/talks/lang/en/thomas_barnett_draws_a_new_map_for_peace.html (accessed 5 Sep 2012)

⁶²British Army Website, RMA Sandhurst: Commissioning Course, http://www.army.mod.uk/training_education/training/17070.aspx (accessed 31 May 2012).

⁶³Antulio J. Echevarria II, “American Operational Art, 1917-2008,” In *The Evolution of Operational Art: From Napoleon to the Present*, edited by John Andreas Olsen and Martin van Creveld (New York, N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 2011) Chapter 5.

3.2. Internal Influences on Cultural Values

Internal influences are those imposed from within the British Army. They are cultural artifacts, to use the adopted terminology, which an external observer could observe. It is important to recognize that many of these internal influences are direct responses to external influences; they are the Army's way of responding to its context. But common to all internal influences is the element of self-determination, giving the Army control over their cultural form. In other words, they are self-generated solutions to the problems imposed by the environment. As such, internal influences can be changed to shape cultural values; they are levers of cultural change.

3.2.1. Internal Environmental Influences

Internal environmental influences are the self-imposed decisions on structures, processes, training and education, doctrine, and resources that shape the British Army's own behavior. These influences are so diverse and numerous that they incorporate all decisions and activities within the Army, from the allocation of resources, through the writing of annual reports, to the command relationships within a platoon. This discussion uses the four environmental artifacts depicted in Figure 2: processes, structures, doctrine, and resources to examine these influences.

Processes

Processes are the “series of actions or steps towards achieving a particular end.”⁶⁴ They are often institutionalized, and provide an accountable, consistent methodology for solving problems that are often repeated. Processes might be thought of as organizationally defined approaches that avoid everyone adopting their own heuristic journey of discovery, and hence streamline regular activities. But although processes are intended to streamline routine business, they can also become entrenched and self-serving if not regularly reviewed in relation to their changing context.

⁶⁴Concise Oxford English Dictionary, edited by Catherine Soanes and Angus Stevenson, Eleventh edition (revised) (New York, N.Y.: Oxford University Press Inc., 2008) 1144.

In 2009, Commander Field Army wrote a letter in which he coined the phrase “the stuff in between.”⁶⁵ The phrase, which related to the unnecessary activity and process that did not directly contribute to the outputs of the British Army, quickly became ensconced in popular rhetoric. The phrase struck a chord with many, who implicitly understood the inference of a cultural friction which had crept into the British Army and was clogging the cogs of progress. This anecdote serves as evidence that many processes have become unnecessarily labored and circuitous; they must continuously evolve with the environment and means available to achieve them. A few examples will be used to illustrate the issue.

In the past decade, the British Army has introduced various technological means of communicating, accounting, and managing its systems. The introduction of e-mail has vastly increased the speed and tempo of communications, but has also expanded the virtual in-trays of everyone involved. A huge proportion of e-mail traffic is superfluous to the recipient, but given the emphasis on accountability and “umbrella culture,” informing all becomes a safer option. Networked accounting systems have been incrementally introduced, such that different systems account for various things.⁶⁶ There is little commonality between these systems, raising the training requirements and complicating the technical support processes. On the positive side, these systems provide others, generally higher up the chain of command, deeper accounting transparency. While this aides the resourcing process, it leaves operators slave to the management of accountability, rather than engaged in the management of resources.

Reports and returns are another part of institutional process which are often driven by the demand for transparency. Reports and returns are generated from all levels of the Army, be it reports that originate from the lowest level and get consolidated up the chain of command, to training reports, readiness reports, manpower availability, reports, discipline reports, or those reports more specific to certain formations or

⁶⁵The original letter has not been traced by the author, although references to it are plentiful both in colloquial speech and written response to it. As an example the author references a letter written by Chief of Staff 1 (UK) Division, in which he reports on progress made to bear down on “the stuff in between.” Reference: Colonel PAE Nanson, Chief of Staff 1 (UK) Division, “Bearing Down on ‘The Stuff In Between’ – 1(UK) Armd Div Comment,” Letter to Chief of Staff Field Army, dated 23 November 2010.

⁶⁶British Army accounting systems include JAMES, BLENHEIM, UNICOM-Q, JPA, SLIM, Anvil, FISS, Separated Service Tool, PB&F, CMIS, HMRS, WISMIS, Defence eCommerce Service, to name just a few in use.

organizations. While reports and returns serve to institutionalize systemic transparency and inform decision making, they emphasize the cultural importance of accounting over thinking and leading.

In line with the culture of accountability comes a demand for quantifiable evidence of progress. This is particularly evident in the training of units, where commanders are often required to keep running totals of progress in terms of training courses completed for every individual. These running totals ensure that mandatory training is completed by everyone in a unit, and that the unit has the requisite number of people trained in any particular discipline. Due to the complex requirements for deployment and the detailed recipe of qualifications required within a unit, commanders spend much of their time as data analysts and managers. This is a far cry from the perceived role of Army commanders as adaptive leaders engaged with their environment, and understanding their soldiers as people, rather than statistics.

The final aspect of process discussed is the mechanisms used to reward desired behavior and discourage undesirable behavior. These mechanisms are fundamental to the perpetuation of our cultural values, as they provide the means for encouraging treasured values and correcting those less favored. Although informally peer and subordinate feedback is received through the natural discourse of social interaction, formal feedback in the British Army is delivered top down, be it through mentoring, annual reporting, or disciplinary action. This perpetuates the cultural values of loyalty up the chain of command, and efficiency when dealing with leaders. It does not encourage the questioning of processes and decisions, and loyalty to subordinates. In practice, matters are not so black and white; a good leader will not only encourage constructive feedback, but also recognize the way in which a subordinate commander interacts with those under their command. Nonetheless, institutionally this system of top down reporting encourages subservient adherence, and discourages potentially disruptive creativity.

In summary, processes are a critical part of an efficient organization, shaping the perpetuating cultural values. The British Army, like all organizations, has many processes that might be accused of being antiquated, self-serving, or surplus to requirement; they add to “the stuff in between.” These processes are the tried and tested artifacts of experience, but may need reshaping to generate a flexible and adaptable culture for the future.

Structures

This section analyses the current structure of the British Army, and applies theory to consider its suitability for the future, concluding that change is required in order to achieve desired aims.

The British Army, just as other armies, has a hierarchical structure enhanced by a rigid rank system. This hierarchy is supported by various cultural artifacts, be it the saluting of officers, the wearing of badges of rank, or the grouping of ranks into hierarchically tiered messes.⁶⁷ Despite this formal reverence to rank however, the British Army encourages the relatively free exchange of views between the ranks in an organization. While an officer or Senior Non-Commissioned Officer will expect due reverence to their rank, they will also encourage feedback from their subordinates, and be ready to enlist the initiative of juniors. Similarly, communication among peers and between different parts of the organization builds the informal structure that enables productivity. So beyond the obvious hierarchy of formal authority, the British Army has networks of unofficial interaction that arise through necessity.

Using theory to look beneath the obvious hierarchical structure of the British Army reveals a greater understanding of its organizational structure. Internationally renowned academic and author on business and management, Henry Mintzberg, recognizes “two fundamental and opposing requirements [of an organization]: the division of labor into various tasks to be performed, and the coordination of these tasks to accomplish the activity.”⁶⁸ Based on this observation, Mintzberg develops a five-part model that when related to a particular organization, helps understand the fundamental traits that might be associated

⁶⁷A mess refers to both the individuals of a given rank bracket and the building within which they meet to eat or socialize. Private soldiers are not part of a mess, but will have a cafeteria in which they eat and a junior ranks bar in which they socialize. Lance Corporals and Corporals, who have typically served between 3 and 10 years, are part of the Corporals’ Mess. Sergeants, Staff Sergeants, and Warrant Officers, who are referred to as Senior Non-Commissioned Officers and have typically served between 10 and 22 years, are part of the Sergeants’ Mess. Commissioned officers from Second Lieutenants through to Generals are part of the Officers’ Mess. Military organizations of all shape and size, be it training establishments, battalions, or headquarters, will either have their own messes for all ranks, or access to messes that individuals can be part of.

⁶⁸Henry Mintzberg, *Structure in Fives: Designing Effective Organizations* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1993) 2.

with that shape of organization.⁶⁹ Critical to this theory is that the strategic leadership makes decisions to steer the organization's strategy in relation to its environment, which in turn causes changes to the organization itself. In this way, the British Army has adapted to meet the challenges of current operations.

The most notable change in the British Army's organizational structure, which can be quantifiably measured, is the expansion of the technostucture. The technostucture is that part of the organization containing the "analysts" who serve the organization by affecting the work of others. Analysts are not part of the productive work flow itself, but they may "design it, plan it, change it, or train the people who do it."⁷⁰ In the British Army these analysts are the staff officers who work in various headquarters, planning, managing, reporting, and coordinating. Over the past five years the number of jobs for staff officers between the ranks of captain and colonel have expanded to the extent that job selection boards regularly report more than twice as many jobs as officers to fill them.⁷¹ The reason for this trend, as explained by Mintzberg's theory, is an attempt to standardize work processes. Given the resource pressures imparted by recent campaigns this trend is intuitive; the standardization of processes allows the organization to realize maximum outputs with minimum waste. This proposal is further supported by Operation ENTIRETY in 2009, the plan to standardize formation training and deployment cycles, in order to move the British Army onto a sustainable campaign footing.⁷² And so the

⁶⁹Mintzberg recognizes five coordinating mechanisms through which the fundamental requirements are enabled: mutual adjustment, direct supervision, standardization of work processes, standardization of work outputs, and standardization of worker skills. These mechanisms explain the extremes of management theory: the "principles of management" school advocating formal authority, unity of command and direct supervision; or the "scientific management" movement which programs outputs, processes and training through formalized rules. Through these concepts Mintzberg develops a five-part model of an organization consisting of the strategic apex, middle line, technostucture, support staff, and operating core. Appendix 1 shows Mintzberg's model related to the British Army.

⁷⁰Henry Mintzberg, *Structure in Fives: Designing Effective Organizations*, 15.

⁷¹Regularly referenced statistics gathered by the Army Personnel Center.

⁷²Op ENTIRETY changed the Formation Operational Readiness Mechanism (FORM) cycle, so as to reduce waste in the system, reduce training commitments, provide more certainty in training schedules, and hence reduce the unsustainable burden on individuals.

technostructure has grown to meet the environmental context. In Mintzberg's terminology, the British Army has thus restructured itself as a Machine Bureaucracy.⁷³

The German sociologist, philosopher, and political economist Max Weber would support the British Army's move to a system of machine bureaucracy. "Experience tends universally to show that the purely bureaucratic type of administrative organization ... is, from a purely technical point of view, capable of attaining the highest degree of efficiency and is in this sense formally the most rational known means of carrying out imperative control over human beings."⁷⁴ Mintzberg recognizes machine bureaucracies to be driven by routine, "with standardized responsibilities, qualifications, communications channels, and work rules, as well as a clearly defined hierarchy of authority."⁷⁵ Mintzberg's description of the basic structure of a machine bureaucracy seems familiar in this context:

Highly specialized, routine operating tasks; very formalized procedures in the operating core; a proliferation of rules, regulations, and formalized communication throughout the organization; large sized units at the operating level; reliance on the functional basis for grouping tasks; relatively centralized power for decision making; and an elaborate administrative structure with a sharp distinction between line and staff."⁷⁶

This organizational structure makes sense given the environmental stability of an enduring campaign. It has provided the British Army with an effective system for managing its tight resources in a machinelike cycle to support the operational requirement.

But while Weber endorses the qualities of bureaucracy, and while it appears to have created a solution for the British Army, the potential negative aspects must also be recognized. The University of Nebraska lists various disadvantages of bureaucracy.⁷⁷ Bureaucratic ritualism leads to the rigid adherence

⁷³The term Machine Bureaucracy is most probably derived from Max Weber, who analogized an effective bureaucracy to "precision machinery in the mass production of goods" in his book *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*.

⁷⁴Max Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization* (New York, N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 1968) 337.

⁷⁵ Henry Mintzberg, *Structure in Fives: Designing Effective Organizations*, 163.

⁷⁶ Ibid, 164.

⁷⁷University of Nebraska Lincoln, "Definition, Development, and Problems of Bureaucracy," online course, http://www-student.unl.edu/cis/soci101w04/online_course/unit1/lxn03-tp06.html (accessed 9 September 2012).

to process, and the overshadowing of organizational goals.⁷⁸ Bureaucratic inertia sees organizations create work for themselves in a self-perpetuating fashion. Parkinson's Law of expanding work is often related to this tendency of bureaucratic inertia.⁷⁹ The Peter Principle suggests that often competent bureaucrats are rewarded and promoted accordingly, but often lack the inherent attributes required for higher positions, and rise above their abilities to the point where they are no longer competent.⁸⁰ From the observations already made, it is suggested that many of these negative aspects of bureaucracy have indeed crept into the British Army over the past decade.

By recognizing the structure of the British Army following a decade of campaigning, it becomes possible to consider its relevance to the future. As the British Army contemplates transition, its structure may prove unsuitable for generating a flexible and adaptable Army. "Machines are designed for specific purposes; they are difficult to modify when conditions change."⁸¹ So cultural values have been influenced by the machine bureaucracy they support, but need retooling for the uncertainties of contingency.

Doctrine

Current doctrine already promotes the cultural values demanded by a flexible and adaptable culture. The British Army's capstone doctrine is *Operations* and contains "the enduring philosophy and principles for our approach to operations."⁸² As a description of philosophy, it aims at description over prescription, but recognizes the importance of tried and tested practices in the foreword: "While this doctrine emphasises the importance of minimising prescription, the land operating environment is just too

⁷⁸Encyclo Online Encyclopedia, <http://www encyclo.co.uk/define/Bureaucratic%20ritualism> (accessed 9 September 2012).

⁷⁹The number of subordinate employers expands to cover overworked superiors, subsequently causing an expansion in the amount of work, and therefore self-perpetuating. The Economist, "Parkinson's Law," *The Economist*, 19 November 1955, <http://www.economist.com/node/14116121> (accessed 9 September 2012).

⁸⁰Named after the Canadian educationalist Laurence J. Peter. *Concise Oxford English Dictionary*, edited by Catherine Soanes and Angus Stevenson, 11th edition (New York, N.Y.: Oxford University Press Inc., 2008) 1072.

⁸¹ Henry Mintzberg, *Structure in Fives: Designing Effective Organizations*, 176.

⁸²Development Concepts and Doctrine Centre, Army Doctrine Publication *Operations* (London: British Ministry of Defence, 2010).

dangerous and complicated to make it up as we go along.”⁸³ The doctrine draws upon the two central ideas of the Manoeuvrist Approach and Mission Command. The Manoeuvrist Approach “is an indirect approach which emphasises understanding and targeting the conceptual and moral components of an adversary’s fighting power as well as attacking the physical component.”⁸⁴ Mission Command “provides a philosophy of command to complement the contemporary Manoeuvrist Approach” and which promotes “centralised intent and decentralised execution,” “that promotes freedom of action and initiative.”⁸⁵ These central ideas, which have been at the heart of doctrine since 1989, shape British Army doctrine and the resultant cultural values that it inspires.

The operational level doctrine manual *Security and Stabilisation* states that, “Stabilisation campaigns require endurance and patience. At times observing and shaping, rather than engaging in aggressive operations, may be the best approach. This can be difficult for a military which expects to deliver rapid, ideally decisive results; just one of the paradoxes that these types of conflict present.”⁸⁶ This doctrinal operational approach reflects the observations made in section 3.1.2., in which recent operations have been more deliberate and considered, with detailed routines, quantitative measures of effectiveness, and bottom up reporting of progress characterizing the operational level battle rhythm.

The cultural values derived from British Army doctrine over the past decade, therefore, have been mixed. The central ideas of the Manoeuvrist Approach and Mission Command promote values of initiative, innovation, flexibility, adaptability, creativity, and trust. Security and stabilization doctrine on the other hand has promoted values of patience, endurance, cultural awareness, and understanding. The doctrine manuals that have been forefront in commanders’ libraries over recent years, it seems, promote many values that will posture the British Army well for future challenges.

⁸³Ibid, iii.

⁸⁴Ibid, 5-2.

⁸⁵Ibid, 6-9.

⁸⁶Development Concepts and Doctrine Centre, Joint Doctrine Publication 3-40 *Security and Stabilisation: the Military Contribution* (UK: Ministry of Defence, November 2009) xvi.

Resources

Military and financial overstretch caused by sustaining operations in Iraq and Afghanistan have spread resources incredibly thin. The result has been a paucity of resources during training, followed by relative plenty while deployed on operations and prioritized accordingly. Culturally, this prioritized resourcing has institutionalized centralization during training, and a reliance on support when deployed.

The result of overstretch has, unavoidably, been the centralization of resources during training in order to enable their careful coordination. Most of this coordination is conducted at Headquarters Land Forces (HQLF), where manpower, training personnel, training estates, equipment, finances, and additional tasks are all centrally coordinated to ensure their careful distribution in line with the operational cycle. This tight coordination has been a huge driver of staff effort over recent years, and a strong influence on cultural values. Within HQLF, Land Force Commitments dictate the operational programs of every unit within the Army in order to meet the theatre specific blend of requirements. In meeting these operational demands, expansive spreadsheets lay out the operational requirement to individual levels of training. Exact equipment requirements, the schedule to squeeze brigades through training establishments, and the allocation of training estates are all tightly controlled. In order to allocate financial resources, brigades detail their given training programs well in advance, so that finances can be allocated to authorized training requirements during the financial planning for years ahead. Coordinating the Army has become a centralized, intricate, and multidimensional, jigsaw puzzle.

Although the adoption of a campaign footing has attempted to stabilize this jigsaw puzzle as best possible, the slightest change in any of the variables, which is inevitable due to changing operational demands, causes significant shock waves throughout the jigsaw. Experience has revised the management of this jigsaw puzzle to produce the most efficient system possible, creating a system of detailed processes, quantitative reporting, and intricate bottom to top accounting. The system demands analysts who maintain detailed accounts of quantifiable data. In a contradiction of doctrine, and the philosophy of Mission Command in particular, resources are too tight for commanders to display initiative until

deployed. Once deployed, many resources are plentiful, and commanders are no longer channelled by the conveyor belt of training. Instead of spending so much of their time as resource managers, the challenges become those of the operational environment. This dramatic change presents the dichotomous roles of a commander in preparation for, and during the execution of operations. Furthermore, given the well-resourced operational environment, the expanded reliance on support, be it firepower or logistic support, undermines the Manoeuvrist Approach central to doctrine.⁸⁷

Cultural values have adapted to accept centralization during training, and reduced risk through surplus resources when deployed. When seeking flexibility and adaptability in the future, decentralized initiative and the ability to maneuver independently without overwhelming support become critical.

3.2.2. Internal Experiential Influences

Internal experiential influences are the educational and training frameworks devised to develop the individuals and teams of British Army. Personal experience is a critical part of learning that imparts ingrained lessons on an individual. As such, the accurate simulation of the operational environment is fundamental to preparing for deployments. Similarly, training and educational courses are central to simulating the thought processes, concepts, and practices that must be applied on operations. This discussion considers the priorities afforded to experiential influences and the focus they adopt.

Until 2010, the British Army trained for major combat operations against a Soviet style enemy in the periods between operational deployments. This training offered a very different influence from that learned on operations. Bold, decisive action in a high intensity environment dominated over the considered approach of current operations. Although maintaining this conventional training placed unsustainable pressures on the workforce and resources, it did provide an alternative perspective to the lessons of current operations. Since 2010, the foundation training for the British Army has focused on hybrid warfare, rather than major combat. Hybrid Foundation Training (HFT) covers the broad spectrum

⁸⁷The operational reliance on fires is discussed in section 3.1.2.

of conflict, in order to “train soldiers in generic field skills, learning and practicing adaptive skills that are applicable for any environment.”⁸⁸ This refocused training demands the flexibility of mind to transition through the spectrum of conflict in a short space of time, and to adapt structures from warfighting at one moment to peacekeeping the next. Even if this training does not enforce a deep understanding of any part of the spectrum of conflict therefore, it does encourage the cultural values of flexibility and adaptability.

The number of training courses has increased dramatically due to the operational demand for new equipment, language and cultural courses, advanced medical courses, and many other specialist requirements. Although training courses have always been a central part of career progression, the number of courses associated with operational evolution has been prolific. Theatre demands have driven countless Urgent Operational Requirements (UORs) for new vehicles, weaponry, protective equipment, surveillance equipment, and communications equipment.⁸⁹ The new equipment supplied brings with it a training requirement for the users, maintainers, trainers, and suppliers. The result has been an expansion of training courses required just to operate and maintain the range of equipment, leaving less time for training that is specific to the operational environment. Given that flexibility and adaptability must be relative to the complex operating environment, this equipment based training demand hinders progress.

Officer education has proven a contentious debate amidst recent changes.⁹⁰ Key arguments that circulate are related to the priority afforded to education, the balance between education and training, and the benefits of standardized education for all rather than specialized education for a selected minority. Idealists lament the paucity of broadening education that has been replaced by information based training, while realists recognize the problems of meeting critical educational hurdles amidst the continuous tempo

⁸⁸Public Relations Army, *British Army: An Introduction*, http://www.army.mod.uk/documents/general/2010_ARMY_Brochure_9.0_%282%29.pdf (accessed 31 May 2012), 25.

⁸⁹UORs are generated in theatre in response to an equipment shortfall. Technical or equipment based solutions are generated as fast as possible, often resulting in off the shelf equipment purchases.

⁹⁰Previously, major educational courses included a year of officer training at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, 3 months for captains at the Army Junior Division, and 1 year for a third of selected majors at the Junior Division Staff College. More recently these models have changed, with a net reduction in time spent in education, and much of that education conducted in shorter, fragmented courses, or online learning.

of operations. The broad consensus is that British officers would benefit from additional education and conceptual thought, but that current operations place real time limitations on expanded education. To supplement the educational foundation, many organizations establish their own program of conceptual training, be it through study days, attending lectures, or writing essays. But this supplemental education is often perceived as a burden to the administrative duties of officers, and imparts additional strain on a taught system. When looking towards a flexible and adaptable Army of 2020, educational reform becomes a key lever to broadening understanding of the contemporary operating environment.

3.3. Current Cultural Values

The cultural values of today's British Army trace their character through the self-imposed internal influences to the external influences within which they are nested. Systemic inspection recognizes a clear tension between these influences; British Army doctrine strives for cultural values that its external environment drags it away from. This tension is prevalent in the dichotomies between the central ideas of capstone doctrine, and the demands of servicing an enduring campaign with tight resources. The following discussion identifies these cultural tensions in order to recognize the systemic pressures that shape the modern British Army.

British Army doctrine reveals its core cultural values in its central ideas of the Manoeuvrist Approach and Mission Command. These ideas are deep rooted; their initial articulation in doctrine since 1989 has led to their forming a familiar part of British Army lexicon. As articulated in *Operations*, the Manoeuvrist Approach, which is not synonymous with maneuver warfare, is an attitude of mind focused on maneuvering the enemy's mind. It is an indirect approach in which the effects are more important than the way in which it is achieved, and which requires "broad foundations of practical professional knowledge."⁹¹ It draws upon specific cultural values, all of which are used in the doctrinal explanation: understanding, initiative, agility, risk acceptance, breadth of knowledge, originality, innovation,

⁹¹Development Concepts and Doctrine Centre, Army Doctrine Publication *Operations* .(London: British Ministry of Defence, 2010) 5-2.

determination, ingenuity, patience, endurance, boldness, and decisiveness. Mission Command, which is a philosophy of command, has its values in freedom of action, trust, and mutual understanding. But despite being at the core of doctrine and the British Army's inherent values, external and internal influences have applied pressure to many of these values.

External influences have had both positive and negative influences on core cultural values. Globalization, social networking, competing ideologies, and social diversity have served to encourage values of understanding, and breadth of knowledge. At the same time legislation, accountability, and fiscal pressures have limited acceptance of risk, freedom of action, and trust. Campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan have accentuated many of the external environmental influences mentioned above. Undoubtedly, the British Army is a more professional force for its experiences, and has developed the values of understanding, breadth of knowledge, determination, operational endurance, and mutual understanding. At the individual level operations have encouraged great initiative, risk taking, and trust, but institutionally the campaign has forced internal responses that contradict these values.

Internal influences have responded to the changing environment and the enduring campaign so as to transform the British Army profoundly over the past decade. The organizational structure has responded to the enduring demands of transparency and high volume output by expanding its technosphere and moving towards a machine bureaucracy.⁹² This transformation has developed processes to standardize operational cycles and manage the stretched resources that enable the maximum capacity output demanded. The changes appear to have been highly effective and have shaped a machine geared for campaign outputs, but they have unavoidably encouraged specific values. Interestingly, those values vary considerably for those on operations or those back at home. During the training cycle the machine regulates inputs, outputs and resources. Commanders have little freedom of action in this process, but provide the quantifiable data that informs progress and enables transparency. The time for developing conceptual understanding, and practicing innovation is reduced accordingly. Once deployed

⁹²Henry Mintzberg, *Structure in Fives: Designing Effective Organizations*.

however, resources are rightly prioritized to theater, and commanders find themselves released into the operational environment. There, considerable risk is both accepted and mitigated through surplus resources, while even the most junior commanders enjoy great autonomy, trust, and freedom of action. On operations, the Army's core values come to the fore, despite a reliance on technological superiority.

So how might the British Army be recognized after a decade of campaigning? It is a paradox of dichotomous elements, contradictions in its own thinking between doctrine and practice, training and operations, freedom of action and process, risk and accountability. On the one hand commanders idolize the flexible and adaptable leaders that epitomize the cultural values articulated in doctrine; on the other they promote the reliable cogs in the machine bureaucracy. This is by no means a derogatory judgment, but more an appreciation of the breadth of challenges faced by the British Army today.

4. Defining Cultural Change

This chapter draws on theory to establish the ways in which the British Army can promote flexible and adaptable cultures. The discussion develops an approach from theory, using the real life external influences of the British Army. While it prioritizes ideals over realities, it maintains realistic measures that are within the scope of possibility. The focus of cultural change is on the internal influences that generate a flexible and adaptable Army poised for contingency operations in an uncertain world. It assumes that the enduring campaign in Afghanistan will draw down so that the British Army can move away from the campaign footing adopted in recent years. The main five cultural artifacts, or levers of cultural change, are considered to suggest how the British Army can build and foster values associated with cognitive flexibility and adaptability.

4.1. Doctrine

Doctrine provides a unique window into an army, disclosing not necessarily what the army is, but what it aspires to be. British Army doctrine is descriptive, not prescriptive, and hinges around the enduring central themes of the Manoeuvrist Approach and Mission Command. Encouragingly, it appears that Army doctrine is well configured to generate a flexible and adaptable force of the future. But the central themes, as discussed in the previous chapter, conflict with many of the cultural artifacts that surround them and drive the Army towards more rigid centralized tendencies. It is appropriate therefore, to begin the consideration of cultural change with doctrine, not just because it defines cultural values and highlights cultural aspirations, but because it is the cultural artifact that needs least change.

Eliot A. Cohen and John Gooch explain that the surprising lack of rigidity in Soviet doctrine reflects their perspective that “failures of anticipation may be best understood as doctrinal failures.”⁹³ Given that doctrine defines the way in which an army conducts its operations, this loose approach to doctrine makes sense; prescriptive doctrine cannot cover every eventuality in the changing character of

⁹³Eliot A. Cohen and John Gooch, *Military Misfortunes: The Anatomy of Failure in War* (New York, N.Y.: Vintage Books, Random House, 1991) 239.

conflict. Only by having broad doctrine can an army have the space for flexibility and adaptability in the face of unexpected circumstances. In proscribing loose doctrine that enables flexibility and creativity within its constraints, doctrine should not be confused with tactical best practice, or tactics techniques and procedures (TTPs). These should evolve continuously through bottom up innovation, as they have evolved continuously over the past decade to remain ahead of the enemy's methods.⁹⁴ Broad and permissive doctrine supports similar cultural values, allowing space to maneuver and apply initiative at all levels, thus enabling an evolving culture of flexibility and adaptability.

On top of providing "the philosophy and principles for the British Army's approach to operations,"⁹⁵ doctrine should establish a common lexicon for understanding. From personal experience, the author considers current doctrine to achieve this aim, helped in particular by its continuity. And so British Army doctrine is already well tailored for the future, both in terms of its permissive nature and its promotion of the Manoeuvrist Approach and Mission Command, which themselves reflect the cultural values demanded of a flexible and adaptable Army 2020. The challenge, it appears, is not reshaping doctrine for contemporary warfare, but shaping other cultural artifacts to realize its true essence.

4.2. Process

Process is a critical part of efficiency, but must be balanced against the mechanistic culture it can generate. Steve Jobs, when referring to process in Apple, said: "The system is that there is no system. That doesn't mean we don't have process. Apple is a very disciplined company, and we have great processes. But that's not what it's about. Process makes you more efficient."⁹⁶ This section draws on

⁹⁴Theo Farrell, "Improving in War: Military Adaptation and the British in Helmand Province, Afghanistan, 2006–2009," *Journal of Strategic Studies*, Volume 33, Number 4.

⁹⁵Development Concepts and Doctrine Centre, Army Doctrine Publication *Operations* 1-2.

⁹⁶Steve Jobs, quoted by Nick Westergaard, "Steve Jobs on Innovation, Intuition, & Life," *Brand Driven Insights*, 6 October 2011, <http://www.nickwestergaard.com/steve-jobs-on-innovation-intuition-life/> (accessed 8 September 2012).

theory and example to determine the balance between using process as a means of efficiency, without allowing it to stifle a culture of creativity.

Kaisen strategy is a Japanese business philosophy that seeks constant improvement through change. Its centrality to Japanese business success, with Toyota presenting a recognized case study, Kaisen has spread to many organizations globally.⁹⁷ The principle of Kaisen culture is encouraging people at all levels to think about their environment and ways in which it can be improved. Not only does this empower individuals and harness their creativity, but it seeks constant improvement in the processes that govern daily life. If managed correctly, Kaisen philosophy does not make everyone a manager or encourage everybody to do things their own way, but instead improves efficiency. Simple as this concept is, its implementation would offer various benefits to a flexible and adaptable Army. It stands to improve efficiency and hence generate more time for conceptual evolution. It empowers individuals and encourages all three components of creativity, as described by Teresa Amabile: expertise, creative-thinking skills, and motivation.⁹⁸ Kaisen promotes inquisitive thought. Most importantly, it supports the central cultural values of Army doctrine, the Manoeuvrist Approach and Mission Command, while continually evolving more efficient processes, and creating more time for conceptual evolution.

4.3. Structures

National culture has a strong influence on the organizational structures preferred within a nation, due to the external environmental influences imposed. Of Hofstede's four key dimensions of cultural identity, the power distance index is defined as "the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally."⁹⁹

⁹⁷Greg, "Kaizen: Continuous Improvement," *The Toyota System*, 10 April 2010, http://www.thetoyotasystem.com/lean_concepts/kaizen.php (accessed 9 September 2012).

⁹⁸Teresa Amabile, "How to Kill Creativity," *Harvard Business Review*, September 1998. The inquisitive investigation encouraged by Kaisen philosophy builds expertise, finding new solutions to perceived problems encourages creative thinking skills, while the ability to affect improvement generates motivation.

⁹⁹Geert Hofstede and Gert Jan Hofstede, *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind*, Chapter 2.

This means that an autocratic or consultative national culture breeds greater or lesser levels of dependency respectively. In other words, people in autocratic countries prefer to be managed in a controlling manner, as it services their cultural expectations. The uncertainty avoidance index is defined as “the extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by ambiguous or unknown situations.”¹⁰⁰ This is expressed through a need for rules and predictability, but does not relate to willingness to accept risk. Used together, these tendencies can be used to recognize cultural preferences.

According to Hofstede’s studies, the British have a relatively low power distance index, and a relatively low uncertainty avoidance index.¹⁰¹ In real terms this means that the British tend to have a relatively low level of dependency on their bosses, and are comfortable with uncertainty. The British prefer consultation and are fairly likely to contradict their boss. Additionally they are highly individualistic.¹⁰² The resulting organizational structure preferred by the British culture is what Owen James Stevens, a business school professor, called a “village market” in which the situation determined the approach, rather than a hierarchy or established rules.¹⁰³ To apply these cultural tendencies back to Mintzberg’s organizational theories suggests that this natural pull for collaboration leads to a structure he calls the adhocracy.¹⁰⁴ An adhocracy is influenced by the support staff, those specialists who support an organization. The willingness to collaborate attracts the opinions of specialists into the planning processes and naturally forms planning groups which are decentralized. Most importantly, according to Mintzberg, the adhocracy fuses experts into smoothly running project teams, making it the most innovative of organizational structures.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁰Ibid, Chapter 5.

¹⁰¹Ibid, 243.

¹⁰²Ibid, Chapter 3.

¹⁰³Ibid, 244.

¹⁰⁴Henry Mintzberg, *Structure in Fives: Designing Effective Organization* , 154.

¹⁰⁵Ibid, 254.

Nobel Prize winner Murray Gell-Mann considers complexity in his book *The Quark and the Jaguar*, recognizing that it is the complex diversity of nature that enables its creativity.¹⁰⁶ Yaneer Bar-Yam suggests that complex tasks require complex organizations, since in a classical hierarchy everything must pass through the single person at the top, thus limiting the organization to the capacity and knowledge of that person.¹⁰⁷ Complex organizations allow this limitation to be surpassed, and for new ideas to develop through interaction and experimental iteration. The more complex a problem, the more simultaneous tasks are required to overcome it. As such, the organization must have more independent separate parts that can carry out the multiple tasks. This demands a network, rather than a hierarchical structure, an approach now growing in corporate management.¹⁰⁸ The concept sits uncomfortably with traditional military values, but as the recognition of warfare being a complex system of interdependent variables supersedes traditional linear approaches in which variables are clearly defined and controlled through compensatory responses, the concept becomes more approachable.

In recent years it has become widely recognized in the military that war is a complex encounter between complex systems in complex environments. Complex systems are formed of multiple interacting elements whose collective actions are difficult to infer from those of the individual parts, predictability is severely limited, and response to external forces does not scale linearly with the applied force. It is reasonable to postulate that warfare can be better executed by those who understand complex systems than those who focus on simple linear, transparent, classically logical, Newtonian constructs. What is not as widely recognized is that complexity can be used to characterize friendly and enemy forces as well as particular military conflicts.¹⁰⁹

To expand this theory, Antoine Bousquet discusses warfare in relation to science, using scientific concepts as a metaphor for understanding warfare. According to Bousquet, as warfare moves into an age of chaoplexity, the most creative systems are complex adaptive systems that employ positive feedback

¹⁰⁶Murray Gell-Mann, *The Quark and the Jaguar* (New York, N.Y.: Henry Holt and Company, 1994).

¹⁰⁷Yaneer Bar-Yam, *Making Things Work: Solving Complex Problems in a Complex World* (Massachusetts: NECSI Knowledge Press, 2004) 9.

¹⁰⁸Ibid, 104.

¹⁰⁹Yaneer Bar-Yam, “Complexity of Military Conflict: Multiscale Complex Systems Analysis of Littoral Warfare,” *New England Complex Systems Institute*, 21 April 2003, http://necsi.edu/projects/yaneer/ssg_necsi_3_litt.pdf (accessed 9 September 2012)

and operate on the edge of chaos.¹¹⁰ The practical implications of these concepts are stark: “the military must be a complex adaptive system operating at the edge of chaos.”¹¹¹

If equated to an adhocracy, the British “village market,” the otherwise nebulous theory of a complex adaptive system starts to take shape without dramatically bending the constraints of military cultural values. John Paul Kotter, professor at the Harvard Business school, agrees that more complex organizational structures are more creative, but that they also require better leadership to enable this creativity.¹¹² This is certainly likely to be true with the less well defined operating structure of an adhocracy. Kotter encourages the diversity and interdependence of social complexity to generate creative organizations. Leadership in this sort of organization is somewhat different from what many might perceive the authoritative style of classic military leadership; instead it performs a lubricating and enabling function. “The relevant skills are both cognitive and interpersonal in nature. They involve the capacity to assess correctly differences among people in goals, values, perceptions, and stakes; the ability to see the subtle interdependencies among those people; and the capacity to identify the implications of the diagnosis.”¹¹³ British Army leadership, as taught during a year of leadership training at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, embraces many of these ideas already. To adjust to a Kotter style of leadership would at times require less of the traditional inspirational leadership from the front, and more of the encouraging facilitation from behind.

¹¹⁰The difference between positive and negative feedback systems is key to understanding complexity theory. Negative feedback, Bousquet explains, allows a linear system to correct errors through a compensatory adjustment, and thus maintain stable equilibrium. Negative feedback systems do not evolve, but correct deviations to restore stability. Unfortunately, when exposed to unexpected challenges beyond the capacity of the system, the system is not able to adapt and breaks down. Positive feedback feeds errors back into a system forcing it to move from its previous equilibrium and find a new position of stability. Positive feedback systems, also termed non-linear, are likely to encounter considerable shifts to their original equilibrium at first, but then adapt to suit their environment. To expand this concept, Bousquet explains that non-linear complex adaptive systems become most creative when close to the edge of chaos, as it is here that the most radical changes are required to restore equilibrium. This concept might be considered through Thomas Kuhn’s development of new paradigms, in which accumulated anomalies force the system to adopt a new order, or paradigm.

¹¹¹Antoine Bousquet, *The Scientific Way of War: Order and Chaos on the Battlefields of Modernity*, 202.

¹¹²John P. Kotter, *Power and Influence* (New York, N.Y.: The Free Press, 1985).

¹¹³Ibid, 38.

When considering the softening of formal military hierarchy, it is also worth reflecting on the reason for their introduction. Rigid discipline and hierarchy ensured that armies responded to orders given unsophisticated means of communication and centralized command as characterized by Frederick the Great. Improved communications, increased weapon ranges, and the passion incited during the French revolution led to dispersal of forces, and the introduction of Auftragstaktik, or mission command philosophy as recognized today. But even through the twentieth century hierarchy and discipline remained relatively formal to ensure that orders were carried out in the face of overwhelming fear and to overcome difficult communications in combat. Today, networked communications together with the apparent reduced ferocity of hybrid conflict offer the opportunity for further decentralized structures that are free to evolve and interact with the human terrain. The enhancement of Mission Command and the Manoeuvrist Approach therefore allow the extrapolation of historical trends, enabling evolution to meet the contemporary operating environment. Culturally, education and trust enable this decentralization.

Despite theories of the creative benefits of a complex network structure, and British cultural suitability for its implementation, the networked proposition remains unattractive to armies whose cultural values are rooted in hierarchy. But the formation of an adhocracy in order to achieve a more complex adaptive network need not be culturally abhorrent. By encouraging the informal communications links that establish themselves within the formal hierarchy, and by encouraging initiative throughout the rank structure, informal networks can form to meet specific problems. By following the British “village culture,” which prefers to collaborate and take things as they come, the Army will encourage a flexible and innovative adhocracy that exists within the formal hierarchy. By applying the appropriate leadership and encouraging the requisite subject matter experts to inform creative networks, the British Army will tend towards an adhocracy which will be more creative, flexible and adaptable.¹¹⁴ All of these ideas can

¹¹⁴The support staff are those subject matter experts, and specialists in areas such as cultural, legal, medical, technical, interagency, or political. Henry Mintzberg, *Structure in Fives: Designing Effective Organizations*.

be implemented without overturning the formal hierarchy of the British Army, simply by implementing subtle cultural changes that would enable the desired cultural values.

4.4. Resource Management and Leadership

When considering flexibility and adaptability as cultural qualities, people become the central resource. Creativity is an invaluable attribute to be encouraged in achieving flexible and adaptable people. According to a professor of business administration at the Harvard Business School, Teresa Amabile, creativity consists of three components: expertise, creative-thinking skills, and motivation.¹¹⁵ Expertise, be it technical, procedural or intellectual, can be developed through training, education and practice. Creative-thinking skills are developed through education, and practiced through training. Leadership is the key to generating motivation, although it must be supported by worthwhile training to provide focus. It becomes clear to see therefore, that creativity is generated from a nuanced blend of training, education, and leadership. This section will examine the leadership and management of people, before section 4.5 examines their training and education.

Leadership for flexible and adaptable organizations requires a different focus than the leadership usually associated with military leaders in combat. Rather than providing the clear direction and inspirational motivation than spurs subordinates through extreme hardship, it provides the more subtle guidance that unifies effort and steers a team away from conflict and towards creative solutions. That is not to say that the place for bold combat leadership has passed, far from it, but it is a leadership style best preserved for intense combat. Intrinsic motivation, as described by Amabile, is that motivation which surpasses the external rewards such as money. To generate intrinsic motivation, leaders must inspire a passion for solving the problem in question.¹¹⁶ Intrinsic motivation is inspired by the autonomy and freedom to explore the problem; factors encouraged by the philosophy of Mission Command. John Kotter

¹¹⁵Teresa M. Amabile, "How to Kill Creativity," *Harvard Business Review*, September 1998, <http://hbr.org/1998/09/how-to-kill-creativity/ar/1> (accessed 5 June 2012).

¹¹⁶Ibid.

talks about interdependence and diversity in a team being a great source of potential controversy, but the best catalyst of creativity under good leadership.¹¹⁷ And so in flexible and adaptable organizations, leadership must provide the interpersonal skills that enable dialogue, reduce frictions, and generate intrinsic motivation through empowering people.

If leadership style is to be adjusted, at least during certain periods of creative interaction, then the system of top down reporting requires reconsideration. The type of leader who leads from behind to encourage the creative and adaptive organization discussed above, should be someone who relates well to others. This is not necessarily a system supported by current practices in which top down reporting supports upward loyalty, but not always team cohesion. In his book on developing learning organizations, Peter M. Senge aptly quotes Confucius's guidance that "to become a leader, you must first become a human being."¹¹⁸ If leaders are to be tested on their ability as human beings therefore, it would be appropriate to introduce a system of three dimensional reporting. Three dimensional reporting might avoid the successful, but toxic, leaders who command others with autocratic suppression and who therefore generate a subservient, but uncreative organization. The concept of three dimensional reporting in the British Army raises traditional discomfort; leadership is not a popularity contest. This may be so, but there are more subtle ways of using subordinate opinions in report writing, for example using them simply to inform the senior report of subordinate perspectives.

Three dimensional reporting is just one way of promoting the desired qualities of an adaptable and flexible organization. More broadly speaking, it is critical for leaders to recognize those traits that inspire creativity, and reward them accordingly. Ultimately it is through feedback that the organization evolves its cultural values by ensuring the promotion of those things that it desires. Negative feedback loops ensure cultural stasis by correcting unconventional solutions, where positive feedback loops encourage creativity encouraging unconventional solutions. This evolutionary system is described in

¹¹⁷John P. Kotter, *Power and Influence* (New York, N.Y.: The Free Press, 1985).

¹¹⁸Peter M. Senge, *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization* (New York, N.Y.: Doubleday, Random House, 2006) 318.

Figure 3, which shows the role of feedback loops in shaping individual and organizational development, so as to enable creative approaches and cultural evolution. It shows that ultimately, people are driven by their own requirements, and so positive feedback must serve these needs to encourage desired behavior. Organizational culture constrains the approach to problem solving, and shapes the feedback given. Particularly creative solutions will evolve the organizational culture if successful, but the organizational culture must first be permissive enough to allow creative solutions.

To consider Bousquet's theory, the system will develop fastest and most dramatically if on the edge of chaos.¹¹⁹ For the British Army this would probably require a catastrophic failure to generate chaos; not something to be actively encouraged. Instead, the relaxation of organizational parameters would allow more diverse solutions and hence more dramatic evolution.

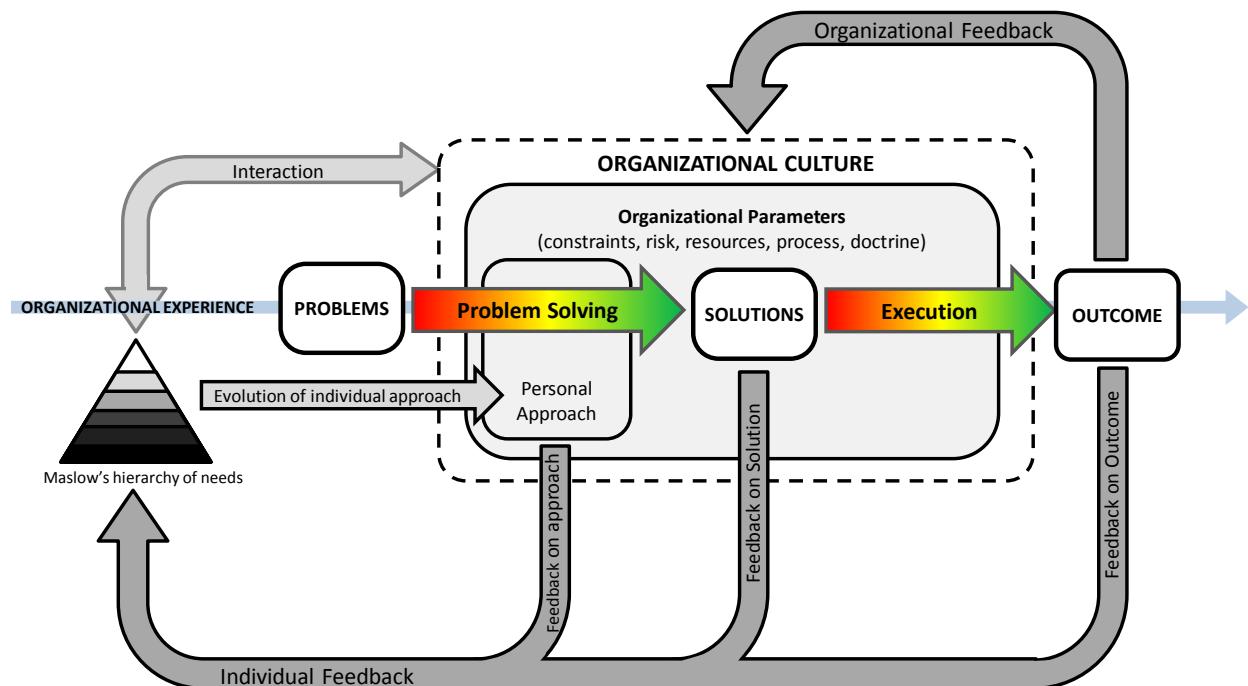


Figure 3: The Role of Feedback in Shaping Future Outcomes.

Source: Created by Author. (Inspired by Hyrum W. Smith, "The Power of Perception," motivational speech and booklet published by The Galileo Initiative. Incorporating Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs).

¹¹⁹Antoine Bousquet, *The Scientific Way of War: Order and Chaos on the Battlefields of Modernity*, Ch 6.

In summary, this section presents two main considerations: leadership must be focused on enabling creativity; and organizational parameters must be relaxed to enable creative solutions and subsequent evolution without the incentive of chaos. It is also important to recognize that these are not new concepts, in fact they are at the core of British Army doctrine, but have been disabled by recent operations. Instead, recent operations have perpetuated the importance of other lessons, such as quantitative accountability, adherence to process, and risk adversity. By feeding these lessons back into the enduring campaigns, which are themselves a relatively closed system, the Army has become highly effective within that closed system, but requires considerable change to become flexible and adaptable.

4.5. Training and Education

Education and training are too often perceived as synonymous. They are not. Where training is the instruction and repetition that imparts knowledge, education must be seen as the broader expansion of our perspectives and how we think. That said, it is often through training that educational objectives can be achieved, just as the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst offers leadership education through the medium of infantry training. The key point is that despite their frequent interaction, education imparts more than the vocational skills learned in training. In order to adapt to the complexities of the contemporary operating environment, cultural values must promote the importance of broad education.

The British Army has a wealth of training courses available, especially following the expansion in technical and cultural skills following recent operations. These training courses, although not focused on educational objectives as defined above, incorporate educational benefits. This generates creativity through broadening perspectives and creating interdependence within organizations. Kotter described the importance of interdependence in generating creative organizations, noting that it forces the requirement for cooperation and inclusivity.¹²⁰ Training courses are therefore beneficial not only for improving individual creativity, but also organizational creativity through interdependence.

¹²⁰ John P. Kotter, *Power and Influence* (New York, N.Y.: The Free Press, 1985).

When discussing flexibility and adaptability, education becomes fundamental as it offers different ways to think about the problems we face and the approaches that may be available. Gary Jason extols the benefits of broadening your “worldview,” or perspectives, adding that “the mental model you develop is what you use to make choices and take actions, and you develop it over a lifetime of learning.”¹²¹ The education of leaders therefore, gives them the expanded worldview to help generate creative approaches. This idea relates back to the previous section, in which an expansion of organizational parameters enables diversified approaches. Expanding this educational worldview can be considered from the different dimensions of flexibility and adaptability: the enemy, the environment, and the task.

Building a broader worldview in relation to the enemy means expanding cultural understanding of the world. To study every potential enemy is unlikely for any individual, but by establishing a broader understanding of alternative perspectives, even if generalized, it opens the mind to other approaches to conflict. By means of example, eastern philosophy is so dramatically different from Western philosophy that most Brits would not comprehend their approach to life, or what they consider important.¹²² Understanding other peoples’ approaches also feeds personal creativity. There are various ways in which this education might be approached, from reading and discussion, to encouraging a regional specialization for all officers. Ideally, education would involve spending time in other parts of the world, a concept that could be used to extend military outreach, while broadening individual and organizational worldviews.

Developing a broader worldview in relation to the environment introduces various topics of understanding. These areas include the political, economic, and international relations environments, as well as the physical and technical environments in which the Army might operate in the future. This might be addressed through further education, travel, or interaction with specialists. Interaction with specialists encourages interagency cooperation, which both broadens perspectives and builds cooperation.

¹²¹Gary Jason, *Critical Thinking: Developing an Effective Worldview* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Group, 2001), 1.

¹²²Richard E. Nisbett, *The Geography Of Thought : How Asians And Westerners Think Differently* (New York, N.Y.: Free Press, 2004).

Developing a broader worldview in relation to the task introduces three broad topics of education: interagency and joint operations in a coalition setting; doctrinal understanding; and historical study. Firstly, embracing the international, interagency, and inter-service approach is a pragmatic reflection of contemporary warfare. Having developed these ideas considerably in the past decade, the Army must consolidate gains and evolve interaction for the future. Secondly, understanding the breadth of British Army doctrine is crucial to generating broad understanding and readiness for different types of warfare. Thirdly, historical study provides an accessible means of exploring beyond personal experience. In John Lewis Gaddis's words, "If you think of the past as a landscape, then history is the way we represent it, and it's that act of representation that lifts us above the familiar to let us experience vicariously what we can't experience directly: a wider view."¹²³ It is also worth noting the relevance of studying historical campaigns that do not involve the British Army; doing so removes national biases and introduces diverse approaches.

In summary, culture must use the time dividend offered by diminishing commitments to encourage the value of expanding both individual and organizational worldviews through training and education. When considering General Rupert Smith's concept of "war amongst the people" this makes perfect sense: a broader worldview will allow the British Army to fight amongst different people, in different environments, and doing different tasks. The benefits of seeking training and education opportunities geared towards this vision has the additional benefits of promoting relationships with joint, interagency, and international partners.

4.6. A Vision of Cultural Change

Cultural change extrapolates the decentralization of command that has characterized Western military cultural reform since Frederick the Great's precisely drilled and rigidly controlled armies. The organizational structure of the British Army will be subtly changed to create an evolving, and open

¹²³John Lewis Gaddis, *The Landscape of History: How Historians Map the Past* (New York, N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 2002) 5.

networked structure that adopts greater creativity within the established hierarchy. The encouragement of informal communications and working groups, supported by specialists from wider afield, will allow creative ad hoc networks to evolve. Achieving this requires refined processes, which will be streamlined from the bottom up through the individual initiative promoted by Mission Command. This empowering of Mission Command will motivate trust and an acceptance of risk in order to enable continuous evolution. Relaxed organizational constraints will enable broader creativity, and leadership will inspire intrinsic motivation while diffusing frictions between the diverse and interdependent members of ad hoc teams within the formal hierarchy.

Broadening individual and organizational worldview through training and education is central to the cognitive flexibility of the Army, and will be achieved through partnerships and alliances that develop international, joint and interagency cooperation. Education through study and conceptual dialogue will expand perspectives through doctrinal and historical topics, while the study of geopolitics and the global environment will contextualize future conflict. The predominant cost in achieving this education is in time, which will be generated by empowering non-commissioned officers, refining processes, and in reaping the dividend offered by the drawdown in Afghanistan.

These changes enable a more networked, empowered, and efficient Army that is in tune with national culture and the doctrinal aspirations of Mission Command and the Manoeuvrist Approach. The intentions of cultural change require sound understanding so that leaders can ensure their accurate perpetuation. Although relatively subtle in its tangible alterations, this approach gives way to a broader world understanding, more motivated soldiers, and a more flexible Army culture that can adapt the physical capabilities of Army 2020 to the contexts of a diverse and complex global environment.

None of these levers of change introduce dramatic shifts from the past, but instead refocus and prioritize concepts in order to evolve a culture that is greater than the sum of individual initiatives and geared towards the complexities of the contemporary operating environment. The approach embraces concepts of complexity and chaos theory, and aims to harness the creativity of complexity through non-linear networked relationships. It relaxes organizational parameters in order to simulate a move closer to

the edge of chaos where the propensity for evolution is most stimulated. In cultural terms, the edge of chaos is found at the tipping point of oxymoron: efficient processes and ad hoc solutions; rigid discipline and creative space; focused training and broad worldviews; unity of effort and permissive doctrine; managed risks and the appetite for exploration; top down encouragement of bottom up creativity. Proposed changes generate the cultural environment that simulates this chaos in a controlled manner so as to encourage creative evolution, and hence a flexible and adaptable Army.

5. Summarizing the Cultural Dimension

This monograph explores the cultural dimension of Army transition, in order to allow the broad physical capabilities defined by Army 2020 to be rapidly adapted to the specific contexts of future warfare. It does this by recognizing that culture is the mental programming that shapes an organization's behavior, and as such culture must be shaped towards the strategic requirements of the organization. The monograph constructs a theoretical approach to shape culture towards the desired requirements of a flexible and adaptable army, before applying this approach to the British Army.

In applying the cultural approach to the British Army, the analysis identifies tensions between its cultural aspirations and current realities. The central concepts of British Army doctrine, Mission Command and the Manoeuvrist Approach, are being undermined by campaign requirements. The cultural values that have become ingrained have enabled the Army to manage the significant demands placed upon it, and have made it a highly professional and efficient organization, but have also infused strict procedural tendencies and rigid cultural values. Cultural values must change to meet future demands. Structures, processes, doctrine, training and education must not constrain conceptual innovation, but instead be used to shape organizational flexibility and adaptability to suit hybrid warfare.

Considering the cultural dimension enables two critical benefits over capability focused restructuring. Firstly, by focusing on the mental programming of the organization, cultural breadth and creativity are encouraged so that the Army is prepared to understand and adapt to any future threat, using the capabilities available to them. In other words, just because all you have is a hammer, doesn't mean that everything must look like a nail; hammers can prop open doors, remove thumb tacks, and carry multiple plastic bags hooked over their handles. Secondly, it generates an Army whose strengths lie beyond its equipment and structures, so that prospective enemies are unable to target its tangible weaknesses. These benefits are profound; if effective, they provide an army that can adapt to new threats, and that evolves too fluidly for an enemy to target. Capabilities inevitably have gaps that money cannot fill, but the enemy can exploit; a flexible and adaptable culture equips an army to evolve and confront these unforeseen threats.

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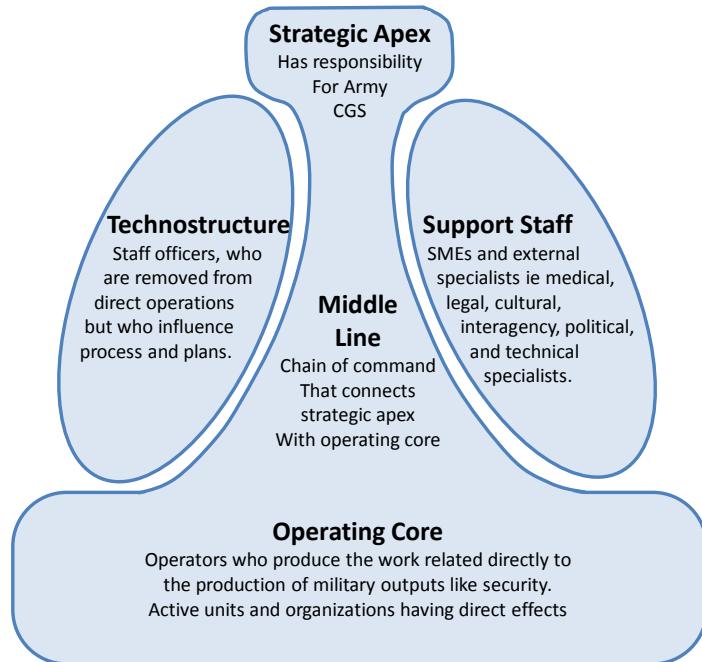
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APPENDIX

Mintzberg's Five Basic Parts of an Organization, Related to the British Army.



Source: Henry Mintzberg, *Structure in Fives: Designing Effective Organizations* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1993), with content added by author.